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ABSTRACT

A study examined ways in which employers in the United Kingdom are meeting the challenge of training and career progression for part-time and temporary employees. First, the literature was reviewed to gather information on the following topics: the growth of "atypical" work, training and adult workers, differential access to training, factors affecting training provision and participation, ways of increasing provision and participation, and examples of good practice. Next, 12 case studies were conducted to identify the nature/duration of training available, sources of financial support for training, employer attitudes/practices regarding training, worker attitudes regarding training, and successful strategies for promoting training. During the site visits, semistructured interviews were conducted with personnel/training managers and part-time and temporary workers involved in training programs. It was discovered that, despite the still-accelerating increase in part-time and temporary workers, the training opportunities and career prospects of such workers remain limited. Recommendations for eliminating the contradiction between a flexible (part-time) work force and inflexible (full-time) training policy included calls for more effective national promotional activities and monetary or tax incentives to offset employers' training costs. (Ten tables/figures and a 128-item bibliography are included. Appended are the training/personnel officer and employee interview schedules.) (MN)

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Wasted Potential

Training and career progression for part-time and temporary workers

Veronica McGivney

NIACE
THE NATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR ADULT LEARNING

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Foreword

Since the late 1980s the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education has undertaken a range of quantitative and qualitative studies designed to map, and to explain the reasons for, marked differences in access to education and training for adults.

Learning and Leisure; Education's for Other People; Tracking Adult Learning Routes; Towards a Learning Workplace; Learning for a Purpose and *Women, Education and Training* have all highlighted the fact that people are far more likely to be offered further chances to develop if they enjoyed an extended initial education. Parallel studies by the Department of Employment showed that the same groups (e.g. people with few qualifications) were excluded from work-based education and training offers as from education. *Training in Britain* (Training Agency, 1989) noted the increase in the number of part-time jobs, and the relative decline of full-time jobs, and that employers were more likely to offer training to full-time than to part-time workers. At the same time, there has been widespread recognition, given voice in the National Targets for Education and Training, that Britain needs to develop a better qualified and skilled workforce.

This report suggests that since the *Training in Britain* survey there has been a significant change in attitude amongst large employers at least. Many employers do now recognise that employees are the most precious asset they possess (although many part-time workers still do not gain access to the full range of training and development opportunities). Yet the report also demonstrates continuing scepticism about formal accreditation, particularly within the NCVQ framework. Once again, it is in the survey of individuals that the scale of the challenge facing Britain becomes evident. Too many of us believe training and education are for others; too few have access to good quality guidance and advice about what might be on offer, or to the kind of ground-breaking provision where confidence can be built to scale the heights of education.

NIACE is grateful for the prodigious amount of work done at short notice, and to such a high standard by Veronica McGivney. We are grateful, too, for Maggie Coats' fieldwork, and to Janet Rice and her colleagues at the Employment Department for commissioning this project.

ALAN TUCKETT
Director, NIACE

Introduction

There is widespread consensus that Britain needs to develop a skilled workforce to address the economic challenges of the 1990s and the next century, and agreement across industry and government that the National Training and Education Targets are helpful building blocks towards the achievement of this goal. However, current trends suggest a failure to date to make significant progress towards the targets. Labour market analyses and reports on training have consistently revealed wide disparities in the training received by different groups of employees, with those who need most – people with few skills and qualifications – receiving least. Employers have also tended to offer most training and development opportunities to their core full-time (predominantly male) employees and little to part-time (predominantly female) workers. This has led to strong differentials in the amount and quality of training received by male and female employees. Similar disparities have been revealed by research on adult participation in education. Studies show that men and women tend to be concentrated in different areas and levels of education and training, with women over-represented in part-time, uncertificated, general education courses and men more often involved in full-time, work-related and qualification-bearing courses. Educational research also shows that many women, older adults and people from lower income and some ethnic minority groups experience a range of constraints which inhibit their access to and participation in formal education and training ((Woodley *et al.*, 1987; McGivney, 1990; Sargant, 1992).

The National Targets stand little chance of being achieved unless the large sections of the adult population who currently participate in little post-school education and training can be offered more opportunities inside or outside the workplace. This Employment Department-funded study was devised to explore the current extent of training and development opportunities open to part-time and temporary workers and labour market returners, and to identify ways in which these can be extended and improved.

The project was conducted in five months between March and September 1993. Two approaches were employed: a context analysis bringing together the findings of recent research, surveys and labour market analyses, and a qualitative study involving open and semi-structured interviews with employers, personnel and training managers and small samples of part-time and temporary employees in different organisations. Both parts

of the study aimed to examine current practice and identify effective strategies for improving the participation of part-time and temporary workers in training and education in order to meet the Lifetime Targets. The resulting report is in two sections: (1) a review of the literature; (2) the case studies.

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to the Employment Department for funding this study and to all the organisations that agreed to take part. Particular thanks are due to the managers and staff who organised or took part in interviews at ASDA, Hands Cleaners, Inland Revenue, Midland Bank, Nestlé Rowntree, Oxfordshire County Council, the Rank Organisation, Safeway, Sheffield City Council, Soho Pizzeria, Southcoast World, South Nottinghamshire College, W.H. Smith and Workbase Training. We are also very grateful to Dr Maggie Coats for helping to conduct the interviews and to the many individuals in Training and Enterprise Councils and other training organisations who provided written information relevant to the study.

PART 1

A Review of the Literature

The desk study involved an examination of a large number of research reports, surveys, labour market analyses, articles and reports from Training and Enterprise Councils. The aim of the exercise was to examine the literature for evidence of:

- the participation trends of part-time and temporary workers in training and education
- the nature and duration of the training available to these groups
- employer policy and practice in relation to providing training for these groups
- part-time and temporary worker attitudes, perceptions and experience, in relation to training/education
- strategies which have been effective in promoting the participation of part-time and temporary workers and labour market returners in training and education.

The findings have been organised around the following themes: the growth of 'atypical' work; the current situation regarding provision of training for adults; the extent and nature of training provided for different groups of workers; the factors which influence training provision and take-up, and the changes that may be necessary to increase provision of and participation in training. A final section contains summaries of initiatives taken by employers, Training and Enterprise Councils and training providers to increase or improve training for part-time and temporary workers, women employees and labour market returners.

Chapter 1

A Context Analysis: The growth of 'atypical' work

This chapter considers the growth of 'atypical' (part-time and temporary) working patterns in Britain and its implications for employers and the workers concerned.

Eighty per cent of the workforce of the year 2000 are already in employment, but it has been estimated that only about 33 per cent are qualified up to the equivalent of National Vocational Qualification Level 3 or above (*Labour Market Quarterly Review*, August 1993). The remaining two-thirds have few or no qualifications and many have received little or no post-school training or education. To rectify the national 'skills deficit', a set of national targets for education and training, regarded as a minimum set of targets for a qualified workforce (NIACE, 1993a), have been agreed by the Confederation of British Industry, the Trades Union Congress, government and other interested bodies. These consist of Foundation Targets for younger people and Lifetime Targets for the adult workforce.

The Lifetime Targets

The Lifetime Targets have the following aims: that, by the year 1996, all employees should take part in training and development activities; 50 per cent of the workforce should be aiming for NVQs or units towards them, and 50 per cent of medium or large employing organisations should be 'Investors in People' (IIP); and that by the year 2000, 50 per cent of the workforce should be qualified to at least NVQ level 3 or equivalent.

The setting of targets, however, is of limited value if there are no suggestions or guidelines on how they might be achieved. This is an important consideration given that, according to all surveys and analyses, a substantial section of the labour force participate in little or no education or training either in or outside of work: people without qualifications, low skilled workers and a large number of so-called 'peripheral' or 'atypical' workers, i.e. part-time and temporary workers.

The Increase in 'Atypical' Employment

Although employment statistics relating to flexible work have been described as a 'notorious minefield' (Huws *et al.*, 1989), all the indices show a steady growth in casualised or 'atypical' employment throughout the European Community:

> *In contrast to so-called 'traditional' jobs (providing full-time employment) we are witnessing the development of different forms of employment as regards such diverse aspects as working hours, duration of contracts, workplace environment, mode of payment, etc. ... A significant proportion of the Community's workforce is now employed in atypical forms of work (Meulders, Hecq and Plasman, 1992: 162).*

In Britain, three inter-related trends have significantly affected forms and patterns of employment over the last decade:

- the substantial growth in casualised employment (part-time working and part-time working on a seasonal, temporary or casual basis)
- the substantial increase in women's employment, particularly part-time employment
- the steady shift from the manufacturing to the service sector.

These trends are interdependent and, according to all current forecasts, accelerating.

In the last decade, the number of women in employment in Britain increased by over 20 per cent. Their number in the labour force rose by 2.6 million between June 1983 and June 1990 compared with an increase of 1.2 million for men. Women currently compose approximately 45 per cent of the total workforce in Great Britain – the largest proportion in any European Community country except Denmark. It is predicted that the size of the female labour force will continue to increase by at least 5 per cent up to the year 2000.

In the 1970s and 80s, part-time work was the fastest growing form of employment (Horrell and Rubery, 1991a). Part-time work for women increased by 20 per cent between 1979 and 1991. Between 1983 and 1990, 1.65 million of the 1.8 million new jobs created in the United Kingdom went to women and 871,000 of them were part-time. During the same period, male full-time jobs decreased by 76,000 (Abdela, 1992). The May 1993 Income Data Services survey shows that this is an accelerating trend (Milner, 1993). At the same time a large number of employing organisations have been restructured into 'flatter' hierarchical

structures with fewer management tiers. According to Handy (in an address to a conference, 'Lone Parents: their Potential in the Workforce', London, 3 March, 1993), these trends have led to the emergence of 'shamrock' organisations – employing bodies which rely on a professional employee core and 'the hired help' – semi-skilled, part-time workers and others such as accountants and lawyers brought in on contract to accomplish specific tasks. Handy estimates that full-time, well-skilled and well-paid core workers account for only about 55 per cent of the total labour force, a group whose numbers will continue to diminish over the next few years. Recent research findings tend to confirm this view. A survey of firms with Employee Development Schemes revealed significant employment changes 'described euphemistically as down-sizing or right-sizing' resulting from the growth of contracting work and the development of core-periphery labour markets. Over one-third of respondents reported that the proportion of part-time workers was increasing (Payne, Forrester and Ward, 1992b). Similarly, a survey conducted among 163 of Britain's largest companies and organisations in 1992 showed that 74 per cent were expecting flexible working to increase during the next four years, with the most likely patterns expected to be contracting out of non-core activities, flexible retirement, use of temporary staff and part-time working (British Institute of Management and Manpower UK, 1992; see Figure 1).

The trend towards greater labour market 'flexibility' has been attributed to employers' needs to meet variable demand, to reduce costs and extend operating hours (Horrell and Rubery, 1991a; Laurence, 1993). According to one employer: 'flexible working practices are business-driven, not welfare-driven' (Dow Stoker, 1991). Several analysts have pointed out that flexible working is often a one-way concept which furthers the employers' interests to a greater extent than those of the employee: 'The motive force encouraging greater flexibility has been the desire for productivity gains not gains in work-family harmonisation nor gender equality' (McRae, 1989: 60).

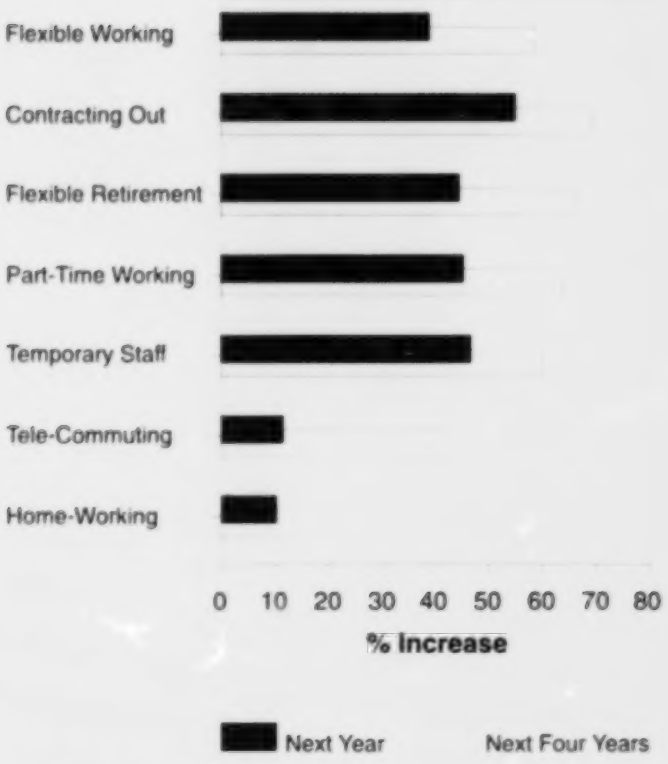
Part-time work

Hours

Part-time is variously defined as under 39 hours a week, under 30 hours a week, or between eight and 16 hours a week as specified in employment rights regulations.

Part-time work involving 30 hours a week or less increased by 22 per cent between 1983 and 1990 (Employment Gazette, April 1991). There are over five million people working part-time in Britain, about one in

Figure 1 Flexible working over next year and next four years



Source: British Institute of Management, 1992

five of the population – more than in any other EC state (Dickens, 1992). The number of hours worked by part-time employees has, however, been shrinking. Dickens (1992) reports that the total number of part-time hours is now spread across a greater number of workers and that during the 1980s, jobs involving 16 hours or less grew more rapidly than all part-time jobs. In 1990, 15 per cent of women were regularly working less than 15 hours a week. The following year, 18 per cent were working for 15 hours or less (1991 Labour Force Survey).

Worker profile

In spring 1992, 23 per cent of all people in work worked part-time in their main job. Nine and a half per cent of these were self-employed (Watson and Fothergill, 1993). The number of male part-time workers increased from 771,000 in 1984 to 969,000 in 1991 (Simkin and Hillage, 1992). Around 15 per cent of all part-timers are now men, 'a significant and growing sub group' according to Watson and Fothergill (1993). There are, however, significant differences between male and female part-time employees: most male part-timers are either over 50 or under 25 (often students), whereas women part-timers are more evenly spread across the middle-age bands (Table 1).

Approximately 82 per cent of British part-time workers are women, representing nearly a third of the total (15 million) female part-time workforce in the European Community (Marsh, 1991). In June 1992, 46 per cent of the 11 million women in paid employment and over 60 per cent of married women in employment were working part-time (*Employment Gazette*, November 1992 and *Labour Market Quarterly Review*, February 1993). Contrary to the stereotype, however, only 40 per cent of part-timers are women with one or more dependent children under 16 (Table 2). This may be because many women who work part-time while their children are young decide to continue that pattern when their children are older (Watson and Fothergill, 1993).

In their survey of part-time employee attitudes, Watson and Fothergill (1993) identify three groups of part-time workers: voluntary part-timers (the largest group) who choose to work part-time largely because of childcare or other domestic responsibilities; involuntary part-timers who want to work full-time but are unable to do so for various reasons, and involuntary part-timers who do not want to work at all but who need the income.

Table 1 Part-time status by age *(per cent)*

	Great Britain	
	Men	**Women**
16-19	30.5	7.0
20-24	8.7	4.5
25-34	8.9	21.9
35-49	9.1	40.7
50-59/64	21.3	18.9
60+/65+	21.4	7.1
All 16+	**100**	**100**
Base (000s)	830	4,870

Source: Spring 1992 LFS estimates

Table 2 Part-time employment by sex and for women by age of youngest dependent child *(per cent)*

	Great Britain
Men	14.6
Women	85.4
With youngest dependent child	
0-14	15.6
5-10	14.7
11-15	9.8
No children aged 0-15	45.4
Total	**100**
Base (000s)	5,700

Source: Spring 1992 LFS estimates

Table 3 Industrial distribution of part-time workers, 1990

Industry	Numbers employed	Part-time workers in each industry
	(000s)	(%)
Manufacturing	348	7
Other non-manufacturing services:	126	7
Retailing	1,060	46
Education	824	47
Hotels, catering	739	61
Medical/health	616	43
Social welfare	468	53
Financial	387	15
Public admin.	293	19
Sanitary services	238	64
Recreational/cultural and personal	235	35
All other service sector	279	11
All service industries	5,139	33
All industries	5,613	25

Note: All figures GB unadjusted. Social welfare includes services available to general public. All other sectors include wholesale distribution, repairs, transport and communications, and research and development.

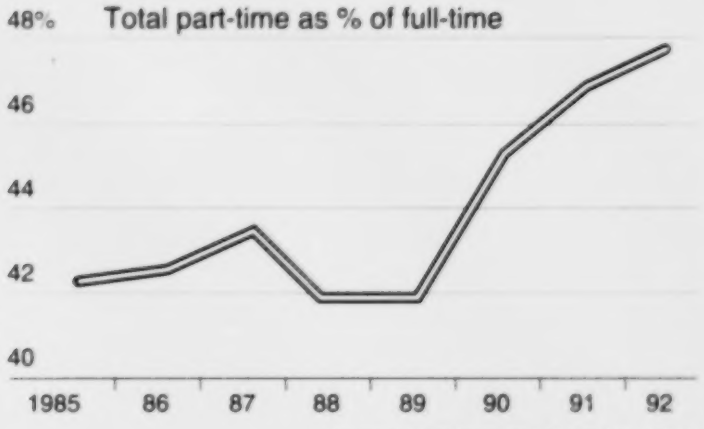
Source: DE Gazette, May 1991

Sectors

Part-time workers are concentrated in the service industries, where they constitute over one-third of all workers (Table 3). Nearly 90 per cent of women part-time workers are in the service sector, particularly retail distribution, hotels and catering, repairs and other services. Over half of women employees in catering, cleaning, hair and other personal services work part-time (Lindley (ed.), 1992). A large proportion of them – up to 50 per cent in 1989 – work in firms with fewer than 25 employees (Equal Opportunities Commission, 1993).

Nearly 60 per cent of all workers in hotels and catering and around 45 per cent of all employees in retail distribution are part-time (Dickens, 1992). Retail distribution is the largest single source of part-time employment in the economy. Doogan (1992) has described the growth of part-time work as the most distinctive feature of employment change in this sector between 1971 and 1984 and all the evidence suggests that the trend is still accelerating, with full-time jobs being steadily replaced by part-time posts (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Part-timers: a growing force in retailing



Source: Employment Gazette, 1993

It is noticeable that in sectors with a predominantly male workforce part-time work has not increased, e.g. science, construction and transport operation. Horrell and Rubery (1991a) point out that overtime and shift-working are the most common forms of flexible employment in sectors and workplaces with mainly male employees.

Temporary Workers

Temporary and casual jobs have also increased, although the extent is difficult to calculate since, according to Casey (1988), there are at least 11 categories of temporary worker: 'consultants and freelancers, labour-only sub-contractors, casual workers, seasonal workers, fixed-term contract workers, workers with a contract dischargeable by performance, workers on training contracts, temporary workers on indefinite contracts, agency workers, employees of work contractors, people on special schemes for the unemployed' (Casey, 1988: 130). According to Casey, many of these categories overlap with other groups of 'non-standard' workers such as part-time workers and the self-employed.

Sectors

Like part-time posts, most temporary jobs are in the service sector, especially distribution, hotels and catering and other services which together account for roughly two-thirds of the temporary labour force. Over 25 per cent of all casual workers are in catering and cleaning. King (1988) notes that 'casual' (as opposed to fixed-term contract) workers are also concentrated in agriculture, banking and finance, distribution, hotels, repairs and some manufacturing.

Worker profile

King (1988) found that the temporary workforce was composed largely of married women aged between 25 and 49, students and other young people under the age of 19 and men over 60 – a profile very similar to that of the part-time workforce. Dickens (1992) points out that the proportion of married women in temporary jobs is higher than their proportion in the permanent workforce. She reports that nearly 60 per cent of temporary workers are women working in lower level and less skilled occupations, although there are a higher than average number also among highly skilled workers such as teachers and nurses. This confirms Casey's (1988) earlier finding that the majority of temporary workers were women and that they were over-represented among temporary workers in education and low-skilled jobs. Male temporary workers were more likely to be in skilled, full-time and fixed-term contract jobs. Casey found that a

large number of temporary workers also worked part-time, particularly in retail distribution, catering and personal services, where he estimated that over 80 per cent of temporary workers were part-time. In the late 1980s, 79 per cent of seasonal, temporary and casual women workers, as well as 35 per cent of casual male workers, were working part-time. This again appears to be a continuing trend. Dickens (1992) has also reported that two-thirds of women working on a temporary basis work part-time.

There is, therefore, a substantial overlap, described by Casey (1988) as 'dramatic', between part-time workers, temporary workers and also labour market 'returners', since a large proportion of part-time and temporary workers are women with children who have returned to paid employment that fits in with their domestic commitments. 0.68 million women who had been economically inactive in 1990 were economically active in 1991, the vast majority in part-time jobs, and 80 per cent were aged between 25 and 49 (*Employment Gazette*, September 1992).

Labour Market Returners

A decade ago, Martin and Roberts (1984) reported that women returners were tending to withdraw from the labour market during their mid- to late-twenties and to return during their mid- to late-thirties. They also identified a trend for women to return to work sooner after the birth of their children than in the past. This trend has been confirmed in more recent research such as the Dow Stoker (1991) survey of women returners in Hampshire. Labour market surveys show that at the end of the 1980s, one-third of all women in paid employment had dependent children. In 1991, 62 per cent of women of working age with children were economically active (compared to 77 per cent of women without children and 88 per cent of men). The economic activity rate is lowest for women with pre-school children and highest for women aged between 16 and 24 (72 per cent) and those aged 40–49 (78 per cent). The literature on women's career patterns consistently shows that the key factor determining whether they work full- or part-time is the age of their youngest child (Table 4).

The Dow Stoker (1991) survey identified three categories of women returners:

- *traditional:* women who return to work part-time after childbirth, mainly in low-paid clerical and administrative jobs
- *new:* women who return after maternity to a similar job to the one they left, often full-time, and resume their career. These are likely to have one child under three and be aged 25–34

- *transitional:* women who return to work part-time but who wish to develop a career and to retrain.

Although all the evidence suggests that many women choose to return to work part-time, many analysts claim their choice is often governed by necessity:

> *For many, part-time work was the only viable option* (Watson and Fothergill, 1993).
>
> *Because of their primary caring responsibilities and the inadequacies of institutional support in Britain the choice for many women is not between typical or atypical employment but between atypical work or no paid work at all* (Dickens, 1992: 34).
>
> *When flexible workers say they prefer their working patterns they are not making an assessment on the grounds of free choice but on the basis of a very limited set of options* (Rogers, 1988: 77).

Table 4 Percentage of women in work

	Professional/ managerial women	Unskilled manual women	All women
Youngest child aged 0-4			
Full-time	30%	1%	11%
Part-time	27%	46%	26%
Youngest child aged 5-9			
Full-time	37%	1%	17%
Part-time	39%	76%	48%
No dependent children			
Full-time	77%	9%	50%
Part-time	9%	56%	22%

Source: General Household Survey

The Implications of Working Part-time

The growth of part-time jobs has undoubtedly extended employment opportunities to a wider section of the population and encouraged shorter periods of withdrawal from the labour market. There are also signs that the shift towards more flexible working is making employees' family commitments more visible and more 'acceptable' in the workplace:

> *The concept has at least placed the term 'family' firmly in the workplace and opened up the debate about the inevitable conflicts of interest between the two ... and led to informal recognition of the competing demands placed on carers in the workplace. The result is that an individual employee having regard to his or her family interest has become more acceptable* (Simkin and Hillage, 1992: 32).

On the whole, however, the change has not necessarily improved women's situation in the labour market.

Gender segregation in the labour market

While there has been some improvement in women's position in the labour force – small numbers have gained access to managerial posts in some sectors – the majority of women employees remain concentrated in a limited number of traditional occupational areas such as sales occupations, clerical and secretarial occupations, personal services, hotel and catering, associate professional and technical occupations and other occupations (Lindley (ed.), 1992). Thus although there has been a small decline in vertical occupational segregation, there has been an increase in the horizontal segregation of women.

Surveys in South Wales (Fielder, Rees and Rees 1991)) and in Hampshire (Dow Stoker, 1991) reveal that employers typically recruit women returners to comparatively low-grade, part-time jobs in traditional female occupational areas. One result of this tendency is that a large number of women are working at levels well beneath their capacities, a point forcefully made by Payne (1991), who shows how women with qualifications are generally working at levels far below those at which men with similar qualifications are employed. Another result is that the concentration of part-time jobs in a small number of service industries is reinforcing occupational gender segregation and widening the gap between core and peripheral workers. As Pollert and Rees (1992) observe, the 'feminisation' of the workforce has reinforced rather than eliminated sexual divisions in the labour force. The gap widens even further when part-time

workers work predominantly on 'twilight' shifts which separate them physically from other workers.

Attitudes to work

The description of jobs that are not permanent and full-time as atypical, peripheral or non-standard has a pejorative ring. This affects attitudes to non-full-time workers who are sometimes perceived as less committed than full-time core employees, despite their growing numbers in the labour force and importance to the general economy. There is a persisting belief among managers that 'real' work involves continuous employment, working long hours and the exclusion of all other concerns. This puts women employees, who are also expected to do all the domestic work, at a huge disadvantage:

> *Having entered the labour market two major features distinguish men's and women's employment trajectories: women are much less likely than men to have continuous occupational careers and are more likely to work part-time – differences which are primarily a direct consequence of motherhood* (Kiernan, 1992: 4).

According to Fielder, Rees and Rees (1991), women are consequently more likely to be located in external than internal or firm labour markets. Even those who gain formal qualifications tend to enter professions through the external labour market rather than progressing through internal labour markets in large corporations which necessitate continuous prolonged employment. The interruptions to their working life caused by maternity obliges many 'to move between different forms of work, from typical to atypical and possibly back again' (Dickens, 1992). Since this deviates from the male working pattern this, as Handy (plenary address at conference, 'Lone Parents: their Potential in the Workforce', London, 3 March, 1993) has observed, has a negative impact on women's career opportunities: 'Work is currently tied to the needs of male bachelors or would-be bachelors. As long as organisations have overworking male cores, women are out of it.'

Similarly, Dickens (1992) comments that employment structures, while apparently neutral, are in fact tailored to the life and career patterns of men. In consequence, women's working patterns, however widespread and well established, continue to be seen as abnormal:

> *The pattern taken as standard is the usual male work pattern. Not surprisingly therefore it is women who are found to be atypical employees ... However, for many women and for various service sectors of industry there is nothing 'atypical' about such forms of*

working as part-time employment. It is their normal working pattern (Dickens, 1992: 5).

Inferior pay, working conditions and insecurity

Fielder, Rees and Rees (1991) comment on the impact the shift towards casual and part-time work is having on working conditions, recruitment and job mobility:

The growth of ancillary services is particularly associated with competitive tendering in the public sector. Even if a cleaning or catering contract is won in-house, the low bid often means fewer staff and deteriorating pay and conditions for those who remain in what are labour-intensive industries. A majority of employers in our study subcontracted non-core activities (Fielder, Rees and Rees, 1991: 16–17).

Although in some sectors, such as retail, the differentials between full- and part-time employees have shrunk (Doogan, 1992), many part-time and temporary workers enjoy fewer rights and benefits than full-time employees. In Britain, employees who work part-time for over 16 hours a week need to have been with their employers for two years before they can claim redundancy pay or lodge a complaint of unfair dismissal. Until March 1994, part-time staff employed for eight to 16 hours a week needed to have served a minimum of five years. Those working fewer than eight hours had no such entitlement. This has put some part-time and temporary staff, particularly women, in a weak position. Lindley (1992), for example, refers to a general trend towards precariousness in female employment which another analyst claims is now characteristic throughout the European Community:

The fact that women are more likely to occupy atypical jobs than men weakens their position in the labour market. Atypical jobs can easily lead to sex segregation in the labour market. The loss of an atypical job is one of the major reasons for women's unemployment in the EC, far more than among men (Van Winckel, 1991: 40).

Women part-time workers therefore appear to be in a particularly vulnerable position relative to that of other workers. Typically, Horrell and Rubery (1991a) have found that they are much less likely than other employees to receive any extra payments for working unsocial hours.

Downward mobility

Women part-timers are much more likely to be over qualified for their current job than both female and male full-timers (Horrell *et al.*, 1989). This is because many women returning to work are obliged to take jobs at a lower level than the ones they held previously (Payne, 1991). Analyses suggest that returning to a part-time job increases the likelihood of downward mobility by at least 30 per cent and that there are few training and progression opportunities for 'atypical' employees, many of whom lie outside the career development stream. Dickens (1992) notes that low-graded jobs which are constructed on a part-time basis are often below the level at which any promotion structure begins. This situation maintains the differentials between part-time and full-time staff and, because of the gendered composition of these, between female and male employees.

In 1990, women part-timers with qualifications were over- represented in semi-skilled and unskilled positions, fairly well represented among junior managers and associated professionals but 'trailing behind' full-time workers and, particularly, men in senior management positions (Labour Force Survey, 1990). While there are signs of a gradual change (a survey by the Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) suggested that about 70 per cent of private sector companies were employing some part-time managers; Oxcom, 1993), variations from the full-time norm result frequently in reduced job opportunities and blocked career progression (Simkin and Hillage, 1992): 'While the number of women working part-time has increased in the UK, it is generally true to say that for many of these part-time status has implicitly brought with it the drying up of career opportunities' (Rajan *et al.*, 1990: 75).

This appears to happen even among women working at higher levels. A survey of 800 managerial and professional women returning to their original employer after a career break found that those returning to work part-time were at a distinct disadvantage: part-timers were 25 per cent less likely to have been promoted than full-timers (although women who had moved from part-time to full-time seemed to recover from this disadvantage). Part-timers also felt less positive about their access to training and development and less certain about their future career prospects. They had suffered 'a larger drop in career satisfaction and career ambition and felt that others saw them as less career-oriented and of lower potential' (Hirsh *et al.*, 1992: 3–4). The women in this research sample were in relatively senior positions and had returned to their previous employers. Nevertheless the difficulties they experienced in relation to promotion and career development were largely similar to those experienced by many other women returning to work part-time. Not surpris-

ingly, therefore, an Institute of Management survey (Employment Department, 1993b) has revealed that female managers are far less likely to be married and to have children than male managers.

Thus whilst part-time work has led to a rise in women's employment, it has resulted in a qualitative underemployment of women, a trend which some analysts of women's position in the labour market both in Britain and in the European Community as a whole, see as unlikely to change (Dex, 1992).

The dramatic increase in part-time and other forms of 'atypical' working has not on the whole, therefore, been accompanied by a significant increase in status or prospects for the workers concerned, although it is claimed that, in some sectors, flexible personnel practices are resulting in a closer alignment of company interests and those of individual workers (Payne, Forrester and Ward, 1992b). This tends to happen most often in the public sector, where employers are generally more inclined to provide flexi-time, job-sharing, career breaks, workplace childcare and maternity provision. According to the Institute of Management, however, even the public sector cannot be complacent since, despite its 'family friendly' practices, women still encounter there the two factors which have been identified as the major barriers to their progress – male networks and colleague prejudice (Employment Department, 1993b).

For the Lifetime Targets to be met, however, all employees will require access to training and development opportunities and qualifications. It is important, therefore, to examine the extent and nature of the training currently offered to 'atypical' workers and to identify any factors that might increase the provision and take-up of opportunities.

Chapter 2

Training and Adult Workers: Setting the scene

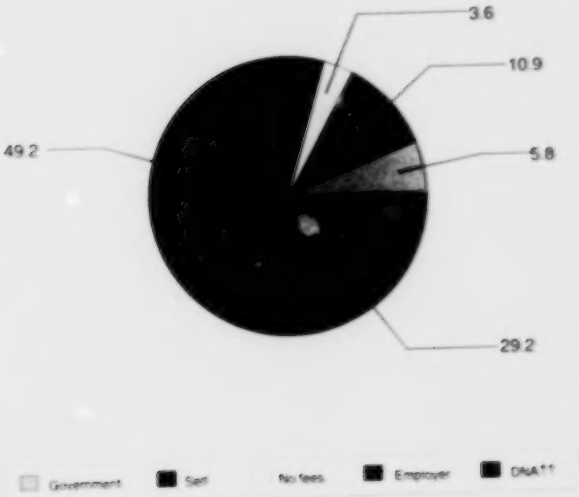
This chapter examines the extent and nature of training provided for employees. The definition of job-related training preferred is the broad one used in the Employment in Britain survey (Gallie and White, 1993) where the term embraces 'all forms of education and training considered relevant to a job or getting a job, provided by an employer at or away from the job, or by a college or training centre or through home learning or in any other way'.

Britain's record on training the workforce is generally considered to be poor. In 1989, Norman Fowler, then Secretary of State for Employment, pointed out that one third of the British workforce had received no training at any stage of their working life and that seven out of 10 school-leavers had received only the shortest training on starting work and no training after that point (quoted in Cassels, 1990).

The three investors in skills are government, employers and individuals. The thrust of recent policy has been to encourage those who are the main beneficiaries of training – employers and individuals – to bear a higher proportion of the costs. Employment Department evidence indicates that most job-related training is already funded by employers (1992 Labour Force Survey) (Figure 3). This trend has beeen confirmed in regional and organisational surveys. A survey of National Extension College students, for example, indicates that private sector employers are the greatest source of assistance with fees (NEC, 1991).

Although Figure 3 suggests that only about 11 per cent of adults invest in their own training, a number of surveys indicate that more would be prepared to do so if it were financially possible. The National Commission on Education (1992: 10) claims that there is: 'evidence of latent demand for learning by adults which goes beyond what employers are willing to provide: there is little reason to believe that adults are unwilling to contribute financially to their education and training if it is within their means to do so'. This is borne out by the preliminary findings of the Employment in Britain survey conducted in 1992 and involving responses from 3,500 employees. The authors of the report assert that training has become a major issue for employees, ranking close in importance to other factors such as pay and job security. They note an increase since the mid-1980s in the proportion of employees funding

Figure 3 First source of individual's training fees for employees* of working age† receiving job-related training**‡ in the four weeks before the survey



* Employees are those in employment, excluding the self-employed and people on Government funded training

† Working age is defined as men aged 16 and under 65 and women aged 16 and under 60

** Training includes both on-the-job and off-the-job training

‡ Excludes replies of Other, Don't know, and No answer. These represent only 1.3% of the total of 3,160,000

†† DNA = did not apply. People receiving on-the-job training only

Source: Labour Force Survey, spring 1992

their own training: 13 per cent of respondents had arranged some education or training for themselves over the previous three years – an increase of 4 per cent since the Training in Britain enquiry. In a third of cases, this was the only or main training received which related to a respondent's current job. In other cases, it was either additional to employer training or was not related directly to respondents' current job (Gallie and White, 1993).

A regional survey, conducted in the Norfolk and Waveney area, also suggests that a large number of people would pay for their own training if it is within their means to do so. The survey revealed that most people seeking training tended to be trying to pay their own fees and that 58 per cent of their previous education and training had been self-funded. Only 27 per cent of interviewees had received any employer-funded training. However, this research found that additional costs such as examination fees, bus fares and childcare expenses, often made all the difference between participation and non-participation: 'The adults we interviewed were not seeking free training. What they wanted was high quality training that would lead to marketable skills and recognised qualifications. They needed affordable ways of improving their opportunities in the job market' (DeBell and Davies, 1991: 23).

According to the Women's National Commission (1991), women returners are one group who are often obliged to finance their own training, particularly in areas where there are no TEC- or European-funded courses specifically for them..

The Extent of Employer-provided Training

Calder (1992) points out that employers have an increasingly important but 'ambiguous' role in training, for not only are they the potential users of trained people, but they also act as sponsors or funders of education and training as well as being providers of training in their own right.

Between the mid-1980s and 1992 there appears to have been a general increase in training provided or supported by employers. The 1991 Labour Force Survey indicated that 15 per cent of employees had received job-related training in the previous four weeks – an increase of 4 per cent on the 1986 figure. In 1992, three quarters of establishments with 25 or more employees had arranged off-the-job training for about a third of their employees and 65 per cent had developed training plans; 60 per cent of establishments with fewer than 25 employees had provided on-the-job training and 30 per cent had funded or arranged off-the-job training for about 17 per cent of their employees during the past year. Multi-unit enterprises were more likely to have provided on-the-job

training than single unit enterprises (*Employment Gazette*, February 1993). In responses to the CBI Industrial Trends survey in April 1992, 31 per cent of manufacturing firms also claimed that they were intending to increase their investment in training over the next 12 months. The preliminary findings of the Employment in Britain survey reveal a similar picture, suggesting that there has been a substantial increase in training provision by employers although it still lags behind employees' perceived requirements (Gallie and White, 1993).

Not all reports are so positive, however. Some research findings indicate that although levels of training have been sustained during the recession, off-the-job, qualification-bearing courses have become shorter and therefore perhaps of less 'depth' (Centre for Labour Market Studies, 1993). A recent survey of over 100 Scottish companies has led one researcher to conclude that annual spending on training per worker is substantially below the figure suggested in official reports (Hyman, 1993), while other groups have found that companies are starting to cut back on vocational training and development budgets.

Variations in Employer-provided Training

The evidence consistently indicates that smaller businesses usually provide less training than larger ones. Although some surveys suggest that many small firms have increased or maintained their off-the-job training in recent years, this is not necessarily characteristic of all small companies. A report by Kingston University on employment in small service firms has revealed a distinct lack of enthusiasm among employers for increasing training. Significantly, respondents tended to be small service firms employing mainly women part-time or temporary workers (Woodcock, 1993).

There are significant differences between employment sectors in the amount of work-related training provided, with employees generally more likely to receive it in the service sector (particularly financial services, other services and the energy/water supply industries) than in manufacturing, agriculture, forestry and fishing (Labour Force Survey, spring, 1992) (Table 5). Differences in the amount of training provided have also been observed in relation to the type of workplace. The Employment in Britain preliminary findings (Gallie and White, 1993) indicate that employees in high technology workplaces are nearly twice as likely to have received training in the previous three years as were those in low technology workplaces. Gallie and White suggest that an important factor in the increase in employer-provided training has been the growth of new technologies and consequent rise in skill demands.

They argue that the increase in skill requirements has led to increased responsibilities at work and better opportunities for self development, except among semi- and unskilled manual workers, where there has been some evidence of a decrease in the skills required at work.

Table 5 Employees' receiving job-related training - Summer 1992

	Great Britain (000s)			
	Men		Women	
	All Employees	% Receiving Training	All Employees	% Receiving Training
All industries	11,181	11.7	9,736	11.1
Agriculture/ forestry/ fishing	160	*	53	*
Energy and water	398	11.7	85	16.5
Minerals etc.	525	12.9	169	9.1
Metal goods	1,812	10.8	498	7.4
Other manufacturing	1,133	6.7	673	4.5
Construction	837	7.8	159	7.6
Distribution/hotel and catering	1,824	8.9	2,276	6.9
Transport/ communication	1,036	10.2	351	9.4
Finance	1,155	15.6	1,184	12.8
Other services	2,287	17.4	4,278	14.6
Outside UK/na	15	*	*	*

Notes:
1 Only those of working age (16-59 for women) are included
2 Job-related training received in the four weeks prior to the survey
* Sample too small for reliable estimate

Source: Labour Force Survey, Summer 1992

Characteristics of Employer-provided Training

Type and Function

Blackman *et al.* (1993: 15) identify three different emphases in employer-provided training:

- emphasis on performance (near-term outcomes). Training is a key process and technical skills or other job-specific skills are developed under the tutelage of those who have explicit responsibility for training. It can be delivered by off-the-job instructors in education or by a work-based trainer
- emphasis on development (medium-term outcomes). Training is likely to be the responsibility of the supervisor, even if delivered elsewhere
- emphasis on learning (prospective longer-term outcomes even if these are unknown). The ordinary worker is responsible for this.

Most analysts draw a distinction between technical training (for immediate needs) and developmental training. In 1992, up to 90 per cent of employers in larger establishments were providing technical training (which could be informal and on-the-job) to help workers in their current job; nearly half were providing training to enable their employees to perform a wider range of tasks, while a quarter were training in order to help their employees take on different jobs (*Employment Gazette*, February 1993).

In their study in South Wales, Fielder, Rees and Rees (1991) observed a lack of a strategic approach to training in some organisations, with recruitment and training strategies more 'responsive' than purposive or integrated. These researchers classify technical training linked with immediate production needs and work organisation, including the use of new technology, as generally 'reactive'.

Fielder, Rees and Rees point out that training strategies vary according to labour market changes and employer use of internal labour markets:

> *A firm with a highly developed internal labour market is more likely to have a sophisticated internal training programme, including not only technical skills but also personal development, as well as various types of trainee scheme* (Fielder, Rees and Rees, 1991: 22–23).

The researchers found that in organisations with highly developed internal labour markets, appraisal and performance rather than training, formal qualifications and seniority were becoming the mechanisms for

promotion. In sectors where there was reliance on external recruitment, for example in the hotel, catering, cleaning and clothing sectors, characterised by low pay and high staff turnover, training tended to be limited to induction or retraining for special needs, and employees had little chance of upgrading or progression. The researchers noticed a marked increase in trainee entry schemes in retail and catering.

Whereas some analysts have recorded a diminution of training associated with increased contracting out of functions (Dickens, 1992), Fielder, Rees and Rees found wide variations in practice: one large contract cleaning organisation maintained a sharp polarisation between part-time women cleaners and supervisors, management and administrative staff, while a large contract catering firm was attempting to develop a limited internal labour market linked to a training programme enabling the progression of some kitchen staff. It is probably safe to assume that such variations can be found across the country, which makes it unwise to make generalisations about the overall impact of new employment patterns on training.

Delivery

Blackman *et al.* have found that developments in occupation-specific vocational qualifications and technology-based training have: 'transformed the ease and speed of delivering job specific training' (Blackman *et al.*, 1993: 112).

In 1992, nearly 50 per cent of employer-provided training lasted less than a month. The most common form of training reported in the Labour Force Surveys is off-the-job training. According to Skill Needs in Britain (*Employment Gazette*, February 1993), about 20 per cent of larger establishments in 1992 had a separate training facility and a similar number employed full-time staff to design and teach training courses. Seventy-five per cent of larger establishments had used an outside training provider for some of their off-the-job training. Most smaller establishments conducted their off-the-job training away from work premises, often in private sector training companies or further education colleges. However, the Kingston University survey and three others summarised in a Skills and Enterprise Briefing (20/92), indicate that training in small businesses is more often informal and on-the-job, with the focus on firm-specific knowledge rather than more general and transferable skills. In such organisations, on-the-job training – learning by doing – was widely viewed as more valuable than a theoretical approach. Another study found that in small owner-managed and family-run businesses: 'There was little interest in formal training leading to

qualifications but more in short courses or workshops related to a specific aspect of business' (Blackman *et al.*, 1993: 78).

Training packages and distance learning are becoming increasingly popular. The retail sector provides a good example of firm-specific training strategies and methods tailored to company objectives and changing employment structures:

> *The in-house character of training stems from the need to develop a strong company ethos, the maintenance of internal labour markets and the centralised structure of large multiples ... Retail training methods reflect the characteristics of their industrial setting. A centralised corporate structure and a large labour force much of which is part-time, working in a large number of outlets, all provide a favourable ground for distance learning techniques. Low unit cost training packages are particularly appropriate in these circumstances. Distance learning methods, particularly where videos are involved, also permit the delivery of a training package which is identified with the company and which imparts company policy and philosophy in the process ... Most non-vocational training is geared towards enhanced customer service* (Doogan, 1992: 34).

Qualifications

Survey responses vary as to how much training provided or supported by employers leads to nationally recognised qualifications. NIACE (1993: 7) points out that: 'Much education, training and personal development undertaken by the paid workforce ... is not formally organised as a "course" and like many short courses do not lead to formal qualifications'. Fielder, Rees and Rees (1991) found in their survey in Wales that most employer-provided training was not certificated but firm-specific, with the trend towards individual staff appraisal. This precluded transferability of skills for the benefit of employees:

> *Although some employers, particularly in the public sector or those recently privatised, encourage the attainment of qualifications and may require particular qualifications from recruits, certification is now less likely to be linked with the internal labour market because of the trend towards individual performance appraisal in such organisations. On the one hand, certificated training through FE and HE institutions is encouraged, with particular growth in management qualifications up to level of MBA; on the other hand, some skills*

are increasingly internalised in order to retain staff (Fielder, Rees and Rees, 1991: 28).

A Labour Research Department survey (*Bargaining Report*, 1990) found that in 45 per cent of workplaces, training led to externally recognised qualifications (with considerably more public sector employers providing this than private). In 1992, 58 per cent of large firms which had provided off-the-job training reported that at least some of it was leading to a formal and nationally recognised qualification (Skills and Enterprise Briefing, 30/92), and in the same year 37 per cent of employees in training reported that they were working towards a nationally recognised qualification (Summer 1992 Labour Force Survey). The Labour Market Quarterly Report (August 1993) showed that 33 per cent of people of working age were qualified to at least NVQ Level 3, an increase of 2.6 per cent between 1991 and 1992.

The literature nevertheless suggests that many employers are uninterested in National Vocational Qualifications. In a recent study by the Institute of Manpower Studies (1993), for example, only one employer even referred to these. The interviews conducted for the present project suggest that many employers are sceptical about the value of NVQs and have reservations about the expense and bureaucracy involved their implementation.

Content

In 1992, almost two-thirds of larger employing organisations had funded or arranged health and safety and management training in the previous 12 months; 60 per cent had provided training in new technology, and many had also provided induction and supervisory training. In contrast, only 6 per cent were providing training in basic (literacy and numeracy) skills and 4 per cent in English for speakers of other languages. Other surveys have confirmed that little help is given to employees with literacy needs (Atkinson and Papworth, 1991).

In the retail industry, Doogan (1992) has identified specific training provision for three separate groups of trainees – a managerial group, a 'skilled' group (e.g. warehouse staff, bakers, butchers, computing staff, dispensing trainees), and the general assistant group. Although these sometimes receive the same training, they also receive different training related specifically to their function in the organisation. Only a small proportion have received formal vocational training in the retail trades. General operatives – the largest group – receive induction training (company values, standards of service, codes of conduct and presentation), customer care and specific topic training (health and safety, hy-

giene, coding, ticketing, product-specific knowledge, etc.). Induction and customer care often overlap.

Doogan asserts that training policies in retail have been devised to provide a degree of multiskilling among the workforce, enabling operators to be deployed to a variety of tasks. Operative grades are structured to take into account the number of skills possessed. Fielder, Rees and Rees (1992), on the other hand, found that although the terms 'flexibility' and 'multiskilling' were used frequently by employers, in the majority of organisations used in their study, 'multiskilling was more like job enlargement than skills up-grading'.

Differentials in the type of training received

There is evidence of differentials in the amount and nature of training received by different categories of worker, even within firms with a sophisticated internal market. Fielder, Rees and Rees (1991) noted that technical training rather than training for future development was likely to be the main type of training offered to operatives or clerical/secretarial staff, while training for management and professional workers tended to be more development-oriented. These differentials are examined more closely in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Differentials in Access to Training

This chapter examines the disparities in the extent and nature of training offered to different groups of workers and identifies the groups who receive the least.

Although employer-provided training has increased and the process of 'upskilling' has been extended to an appreciably wider section of the workforce since the mid-1980s (Gallie and White, 1993), the Employment in Britain preliminary findings suggest that there is still a substantial gap between the numbers of workers who want training and those who actually receive it.

> *Lack of training in Britain has sometimes been blamed on lack of interest among workers but this does not hold water any more. Good training provision is near the top of people's preferences about what a job should offer. Nearly two-thirds of the sample wanted training very much or a fair amount ... One in five of those who want training in the future feel they are unlikely to get it* (Gallie and White, 1993: 29).

The evidence cumulatively demonstrates that the chief recipients of training remain the groups who have always received the lion's share: people with qualifications; those who have already received formal training; higher grade workers; younger workers (under 35); and people in full-time employment. In 1991, nearly two-thirds of those undertaking job-related training already had a qualification at GCE A-Level or above (Turner, Dale and Hurst, 1992; Employment Department, 1992a). A survey of 4,000 firms with over 25 workers revealed that the types of employee most likely to receive training were:

- graduates (73 per cent)
- trainees/apprentices (71 per cent)
- managers and administrators (53 per cent)
- clerical and secretarial (43 per cent) (Skills and Enterprise Briefing, 30/92).

Paradoxically, it is those most in need of training who receive least. The TUC (1990) has identified a strong bias among employers towards providing training for the already trained, and it has frequently been observed that it is the people who have benefited least from the education system who also benefit least from company training (Payne, Forrester,

and Ward, 1992a). All the evidence from successive national and regional surveys points to a persisting lack of training for the low skilled and unqualified workers. Manual workers continue to receive the least job-related training, despite their numbers in the workforce and despite the acknowledged urgency of the need to upgrade the skills of the British workforce. The 1991 Labour Force Survey showed that the proportion of professionals, associate professionals and technicians receiving job-related training was over five times that of plant and machine operatives (Turner, Dale and Hurst, 1992). Similarly, the report on the preliminary findings of the Employment in Britain survey comments that there are still substantial differences 'in virtually every aspect of training and development' between those in higher-level jobs and those in jobs at lower skill levels. The survey found evidence of a marked lack of training provision for manual and less skilled workers and those with very low levels of qualifications, in spite of the fact that they are as likely as others to want training and to regard it as important (Gallie and White, 1993). The survey in South Wales also revealed that semi-skilled production operatives received little training and any that was offered was usually limited to short periods of induction and retraining, in contrast to the longer and more developmental training offered to management and professional levels (Fielder, Rees and Rees, 1991).

Some researchers and education/training providers have encountered groups of manual employees who have not received a single day's training in their working lives (Kelcher, 1990; Mace, 1992). Although Mace (1992) and others have found that the public sector performs better in this respect than the private sector, there is no room for complacency: an organisation offering basic education and communication skills for unskilled workers found that workers in residential homes for the elderly in South London were almost entirely untrained – a situation with grave implications for the Care in the Community policy (Workbase, 1993).

Fielder, Rees and Rees (1991) and Bonnerjea (1990) attribute disparities in the training offered to different groups of employees to the persistence of hierarchical divisions in the workforce. Bonnerjea suggests that some employers often, albeit unconsciously, divide their workforce into two groups:

> *those workers who are performing non-manual work, who have formal education and qualifications and whose literacy skills are in a sense certified, and those who are performing manual and unskilled work – work assumed to need no training and no qualifications or literacy. The former require training, the latter do not. The former receive training needs analyses, the latter do*

not. The former are part of human resources plans, the latter are not (Bonnerjea, 1990: 47).

Training and 'Atypical' Workers

There are signs of a similar workforce divide between full-time workers and those working on a part-time, temporary or casual basis. Although the report *Training in Britain* (Training Agency, 1989) recommended that employers should stop concentrating training on their core full-time employees in order to meet skill needs, the evidence since 1990 suggests that there is still a significant training gap between full-time, permanent employees and part-time and temporary workers, irrespective of factors such as length of service and qualifications (Green, 1991). The Labour Research Department (1990) survey of over 900 workplaces showed that while 90 per cent offered some training to employees, workers on non-standard contracts had access to training in less than 75 per cent; part-timers in 58 per cent; temporary workers in 51 per cent; and seasonal workers in 32 per cent. A survey of women workers published the same year also revealed that full-timers were nearly twice as likely to receive training as part-timers (Royal Institute of Public Administration, 1990). Similar findings were reported in the 1991 Labour Force survey, in Labour Market and Skill Trends 1993/94 (Employment Department, 1992) and, more recently, in the Labour Market Quarterly Review (February 1993), which found 'clear differences' in the amount of training received by full- and part-time workers. Some people reporting verbally to the present project maintained that part-time workers are also excluded from some employee development schemes and workplace initiatives to improve basic and general education.

The evidence suggests that temporary workers also have limited access to training. Casey (1988) found that the amount they received was:

> *usually minimal, amounting to little more than an introduction, with other skills being learned on the job. Where temporary workers occupied skilled posts, they were required to possess the relevant skills in advance. In most cases, these skills were of a very general nature. In a few cases, they were highly specific to a particular organisation* (Casey, 1988: 142).

In some cases, disparities in the amount of training offered appear to be widening as a result of employment restructuring. According to Dickens (1992), for example, increasing use of contracting out and competitive tendering can be linked to a decline in training provision for lower grade workers. A survey conducted for the London Borough of Ealing, for example, showed that contracting out of cleaning and catering services

at Heathrow Airport had resulted in a lowering of wages, staffing levels and conditions of service, including training. The survey showed that some Asian women cleaners were offered no training in the use of cleaning chemicals, no skills training and no training in English as a second language. The lack of training was attributed by a company spokesman to the fact that the work the women were doing was largely an 'extension of what they were already doing at home' (London Borough of Ealing, undated).

Part-time and temporary work is therefore associated, in many occupational areas, with no or limited training. This can be a self-perpetuating trend since, according to Simkin and Hillage (1992), the workers concerned are often restricted to lower grade jobs where the opportunity or necessity for training is reduced. There are nevertheless some signs of change. A 1990 Labour Research survey showed clearly that the incidence of training rises in proportion to the rise in the number of part-time workers in an organisation (Labour Research Department, 1990) (Table 6).

Table 6 Percentage of replies indicating that part-timers can receive training

Workplace with:	
less than 10% women	38%
10% - 33% women	57%
33% - 66% women	70%
66% - 90% women	76%
More than 90% women	70%
All workplaces	**58%**

Source: Labour Research Department, 1990

In some sectors (retail, banking), the increase in part-time employment has resulted in a significant erosion of differentials in training and other benefits between full- and part-time staff (Doogan, 1992). However, this does not significantly alter the overall picture: full-time staff tend to get far more training and promotion opportunities than 'atypical' workers.

This situation is creating a two-tier system of career development within employment.

Training and Women Employees

Since women compose the majority of part-time and temporary workers, the dearth of training for 'atypical' workers affects them the most. In 1989, fewer than one in 14 women aged 20 or over, working part-time in non-manual occupations, reported receiving recent job-related training, compared with one in five full-time women workers and male non-manual workers in the same age group (EOC, 1990). Clarke's (1991) analysis of national data highlighted a significant lack of training provision for women part-time employees in all occupations. The Labour Market Quarterly Review (February 1993) comments on the contradiction that although nearly as many women work part-time as full-time, very few of the former receive training: 'among part-timers the incidence (of training) is higher among men' (LMQR, 1993: 6). Unpublished data compiled for Sargant's survey (1992) seem to suggest that women part-time workers tend to participate little in any form of education or training, although other findings differ on this. National Extension College surveys, for example, reveal that the typical correspondence student is a part-time woman clerical worker (National Extension College, 1991).

Educational research has frequently revealed marked differences between men and women in the amount and nature of education and training they undertake after leaving school. Survey findings on participation in education and training: 'suggest strongly that men undertake significantly more college- or work-based education and training than do women' (NIACE, 1993: 12). Moreover:

> *Statistics sometimes show how training tends to reinforce patterns by giving key development training to the 'cultural norm', i.e. the white able-bodied male* (Cameron Woods Associates, 1992).

The Equal Opportunities Commission (1990) has reported that women are more likely than men to receive on-the-job training only, a difference particularly marked in managerial and sales occupations. The report *Training in Britain* (Training Agency 1989) concluded that women were poorly served by training, and, more recently, on the first anniversary of the Opportunity 2000 campaign, the then Employment Secretary, Mrs Gillian Shephard, declared that it was 'startling that men were 50 per cent

more likely to have received job-related training than women' (*The Guardian*, 1992).

Nevertheless, here also there are signs of change. The Employment in Britain findings show that, since the mid-1980s, there has been a narrowing of the differences between men and women in the qualifications required for jobs and experience of skills change. There is still, however, a gap between the sexes, with men more likely to be in work requiring qualifications and more likely to have experienced an increase in skills at all job levels other than at professional/managerial level, where the highest increase was among women (Gallie and White, 1993).

National surveys reveal a general increase in the proportion of women receiving job-related training over the last five or so years. The 1992 Labour Force Survey, for example, indicated that for the third successive year, slightly more women than men had received work-related training in the four weeks before the survey. Although there were 225,000 more male employees of working age receiving job-related training than their female counterparts, women employees of working age were more likely to have undertaken such activities (*Employment Gazette*, August 1992). Employer-provided training varies, however, for different groups of women employees. It has been found that married women and those with young children are significantly less likely to receive training than other women employees or men (Green, 1991a and b). There are also variations according to age: the Labour Force Surveys and the Labour Market and Skills Trends report for 1993/94 (Employment Department, 1992) show that women between the ages of 16 and 24 tend to receive less training than men, while women aged between 35 and 64 receive more – a marked change from 1989, when twice as many men as women over 35 had received training. This change has been widely attributed to an increase in short-term training associated with recruitment and induction for women re-entering the labour market after a break (Clarke, 1991; Green, 1991a and b). Green (1991a and b), however, notes that women respondents to the Labour Force surveys are more likely to have been in their job for less than a year and induction training is unlikely to assist their progress within their occupation. As currently designed, the Labour Force Surveys take no account of the nature and aims of training or the fact that there is a substantial difference between induction training and longer-term, developmental training. They simply ask respondents of working age to identify whether in the previous four weeks they have undertaken any job-related training (defined as education or training connected with their current job or a job they might be able to do in the future).

Clarke (1991) stresses that there are variations in the amount of training women receive in different occupational areas. She points out that while, overall, the proportions of women and men employees receiving training are similar, the aggregate figures conceal underlying gender inequalities, primarily because of the differences in women's and men's occupational distribution and the concentration of women in lower grades within particular occupations. Unpublished data from the 1989 Labour Force Survey revealed that in two industrial divisions where women workers were in a marked minority – energy and water supply and transport and communications – a higher proportion of female than male workers received some training. Conversely, in the industrial sectors where large numbers of women were concentrated, a higher proportion of men received training, although in some cases 'rounding of figures suggested that it was more equal than it actually was' (Clarke, 1991: 32–33). Later analyses also point up this anomaly. The Labour Market Quarterly Review (February 1993) found evidence that among managers, professionals and administrators, women were likely to have received as much or even more training as men. In areas where women workers predominate, however, men were more likely to have received training. This can be clearly seen in Table 5 (page 23), which shows that in the hotel, distribution and catering sectors – all characterised by a largely female workforce – less than 7 per cent of the 2.2 million women workers received training in 1992.

Gender differences have also been revealed in the professions where large numbers of women are concentrated. Three surveys of teachers – in Leeds, the former Inner London Education Authority and Birmingham – have indicated that women teachers receive less training than men, tend to attend different types of course, and are less likely to get release for training. The Leeds City Council survey (1992) showed that the majority of those attending a large number of training courses were male heads and deputies and that over 70 per cent of the women teachers attending no training courses were either part-time or temporary. In secondary schools, women at all levels attended less training in working hours than men and were more likely than men to have applications blocked at school level (Leeds City Council, 1992).

This reflects the finding of Bevan and Thompson (1992) that men at similar job levels and appraisal ratings as women are more likely to have been offered training and promotion opportunities. Similarly, the first findings of the Employment in Britain survey indicate that although the chances of receiving training ostensibly differ only slightly between men and women, men are getting somewhat more on all measures, and although training for women may have increased, their chances of

promotion have not, and in this respect they are still at a considerable disadvantage compared with men (Gallie and White, 1993).

Disparities in access to training may be partly explained by the cultural assumptions associated with training. Developmental as opposed to technical training is usually provided for those on a career path. Male employees are more often assumed to be on a career path than women. However, as Clarke (1991) points out, a number of other factors also affect decisions on who receives job-related training. Factors such as age, qualifications, grade, hours worked, occupation, industry, place of residence and domestic circumstances, interact with gender to produce differential patterns of access to training for women and men. Clarke considers occupational segregation to be one of the principal contributors to gender differences in training provision, and part-time employment as the factor which most reduces women's training opportunities, regardless of occupation. The fact that part-time workers tend to be concentrated in smaller workplaces also contributes to women's more restricted training opportunities.

There appear to have been few attempts to counteract the gender imbalance in employer-provided training. In her review of training, Clarke found that most employers did not have a long-term training strategy or commitment and few had made significant use of the provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act to offer training opportunities to women. A similar picture emerged from the Dow Stoker (1991) survey in Hampshire which found that only 2 per cent of responding employers had made use of the provision of the Sex Discrimination Act to offer single-sex training and only six companies (all larger ones) had special programmes to attract women returners. Fielder, Rees and Rees (1991) also report that although some firms in Wales saw the need to balance the age structure of their workforce, little was changing in terms of positive action for women in recruitment, retention and training.

Training for Women 'Returners'

Women wishing to return to the labour force after a period of family formation are generally badly served by training, particularly, according to Mace, if they are in their middle years: 'Without a linear progression of full-time employment, women are bottom of the league for in-service training' (Mace and Yarnit, 1987: 23).

Clarke (1991) identified a strong but unmet need for part-time training among women with family commitments who wished to return to paid employment. Similar findings were produced by the Hampshire survey. This showed that 77 per cent of respondents were interested in career

development and 43 per cent 'very interested'. The vast majority, however, had undertaken no training when away from work; 20 per cent had undertaken courses independently but without relation to employment prospects; and 85 per cent had lost contact with their previous workplace (Dow Stoker, 1991). Moreover, although unemployed women were eligible to join the former Employment Training Scheme, far fewer women than men actually participated, sufficienting to Payne (1991), was because they had not accumulated sufficient National Insurance contributions to register as unemployed, and because of the lack of single-sex courses and childcare support.

While there have been some excellent part-time training schemes for labour market returners provided with European and local or central government assistance, their success, according to Clarke (1991), has been limited by the short-term, temporary nature of the funding provided and the fact that the number of places provided has been very small relative to potential demand. Some TECs have been providing or supporting effective 'back to work' courses, but there is some doubt about their ability to continue doing so in the present economic climate:

> *By the middle of 1992, recession, combined with a tighter funding regime had changed the climate. TEC resources were concentrated on the priority groups (i.e. the registered unemployed). Returners are officially not a priority group for TEC funding and with increasing unemployment and the consequent rise in the numbers in the priority groups, initiatives for women, often financed from surpluses, were decreasing rapidly ... It is unlikely that promising training programmes for returners funded outside the mainstream adult training programmes will survive for long in the current economic climate without more support from central government* (Equal Opportunities Commission, 1993: 53–54).

A recent Equal Opportunities Commission investigation into the publicly-funded vocational training system in England and Wales showed that 89 per cent of the 66 responding TECs had a corporate objective relating to widening access to training provision but fewer than 10 had a specific equal opportunities objective. Thirty-eight (58 per cent) referred to equal opportunities initiatives they had undertaken or were going to use. Most referred to the need to address the problem of childcare, but only 11 (17 per cent) referred to any childcare-supported training initiatives (Equal Opportunities Commission, 1993).

Differences between men and women in their financial ability to undertake training

Clarke (1991) identified domestic responsibilities and financial considerations as the greatest obstacles to women seeking or undertaking training. Similarly, the Norfolk and Waveney survey showed that women seeking training were experiencing considerable financial difficulties, particularly in relation to childcare costs (Debell and Davies, 1991). A National Extension College (NEC) survey has also found that significantly more women than men (especially unemployed women or those in part-time employment) found fee payment difficult or a severe hardship. Moreover, there were differences between male and female students in the extent of help they received for course fees: more than twice as many male as female respondents received help with fee payment from a spouse or other family member and men were more likely than women to receive help with fees from any source approached (NEC, 1991).

Further differentials can be seen in relation to loans. Only one-third of individuals receiving Career Development Loans in 1990–92 were women, and in 1991–2 only 7 per cent of trainees receiving the loans were part-time workers (LMQR, February 1993). Payne (1991) suggests that women's reluctance to take out loans is understandable:

> *Women would be justified in putting their own financial position and that of their families at risk only if they could be sure of secure and well-paid employment afterwards. Women's family commitments and the casualised nature of much of the employment that is open to them mean that their expectations can never be as confident in this regard as men's* (Payne, 1991: 152–153).

Payne maintains that the push to make employers and trainees take main responsibility for the costs of training puts women at a disadvantage since employers have always invested more in training men than women and men tend to earn more than women.

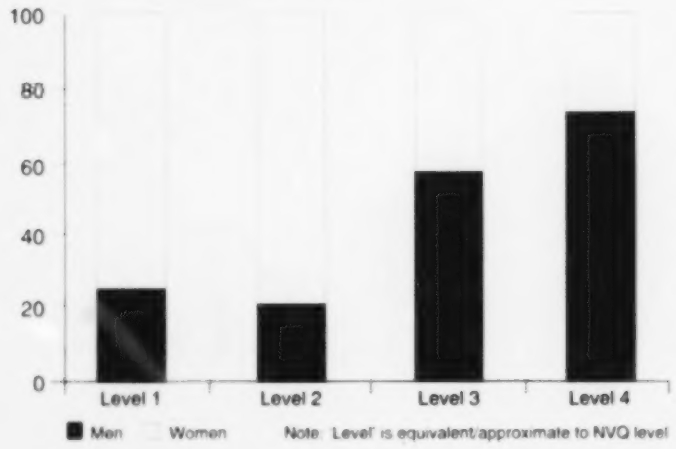
Possession of qualifications

Clarke (1991) identified possession of qualifications as one of the factors which increases women's likelihood of receiving training. The Employment in Britain preliminary findings found that the greatest differences in training participation related to people's qualification levels: people without educational qualifications participated in training less than half as frequently as those with qualifications. Self-financing of training accentuated the difference further: those with educational qualifications

entered self-financed training three times as frequently as those without qualifications (Gallie and White, 1993).

Where vocational qualifications are concerned, there is also evidence of a marked gender difference. The Labour Market Quarterly Review (February 1993) shows that four-fifths of all NVQs gained by women are in the clerical and secretarial area, while men's awards are spread across a wider set of occupations. Women are particularly poorly represented in NVQ awards in the craft and technical areas. They are also concentrated in the lower level grades (1 and 2), and account for three-quarters of all awards at level 1 (Figure 4). This is a worrying finding, since a number of national awarding bodies have published policy statements in support of the use of unpaid work competence for credit towards their awards: 'Unpaid work ... must not be marginalised or seen by potential candidates as anything other than a standard progression route' (NCVQ Information Note, 1991). Several pilot courses have demonstrated that the skills women develop in their unpaid work in managing households, caring for children and dependent adults and doing voluntary work can be accredited up to level 3 (Butler, 1992; Leigh and Butler, 1993). However, many employers and education and training providers are still reluctant to recognise and accept this kind of evidence.

Figure 4 Attainment of vocational qualifications



Source: National Information System for Vocational Qualifications

It has been observed that qualifications provide less protection against unemployment for women than for men, which suggests:

> *either that employers like their women employees unqualified, or that for women, gaining qualifications can make it impossible to find the sort of unskilled jobs which tradition accords them* (TUC, 1990: 2).

The sharp inequalities in the amount and nature of training offered to different groups will need to be recognised and tackled before the Lifetime Targets can be met. In particular, there will need to be changes in training policy in favour of low-skilled and unqualified individuals, part-time and temporary workers, women employees and those who have taken a career break. Without attention to the training of these groups, the targets will signify little more than wishful thinking.

But why have the training needs of these groups been neglected for so long? The next chapter examines the factors which influence provision of training and those which motivate or discourage individuals from seeking and participating in training.

Chapter 4

Factors Which Influence the Provision and Take-up of Training

This chapter analyses the reasons for the relatively low provision and take-up of training among some sectors of the workforce. It identifies a number of factors which positively or negatively affect the provision of training, as a starting point for establishing strategies to achieve the Lifetime Targets.

Achievement of the Lifetime Targets will require action from those in a position to fund or provide training to make it available to all actual and potential members of the workforce. It will also require individual employees to be motivated to participate in training. However, the research literature suggests there are a number of factors which significantly affect the readiness of employers to train all their workforce and the motivation of individuals to seek training.

Incentives to Provide Training

The training of part-time and temporary employees, older workers and women employees depends heavily on the actions of employers. It is important to identify first, therefore, the factors which act as a spur to provide training.

Blackman *et al.* (1993) have identified as incentives an employer's need or desire to:

- achieve specific objectives
- comply with compulsory health and safety regulations
- comply with company initiatives to implement quality standards
- raise the company profile to achieve national recognition (e.g. through an award scheme such as Investors in People)
- support the introduction of new technology
- prepare for and support changes brought about by major restructuring.

The research literature as a whole confirms these, and the introduction of new technology in particular, as the major incentives to provide more training (Gallie and White, 1993).

The research conducted for the present study suggests that other spurs to employer-provided training have been: Investors in People (by June 1993

117 organisations with over 200 employees had received IIP recognition and 3,100 organisations of all sizes had made a commitment to work towards the award; LMQR, August 1993); new legislation (such as the Children Act, Care in the Community); Health Service changes; competition and customer demand that companies meet kitemark standards such as BS5750. In some organisations the development of National Vocational Qualifications has also led to improved training by providing employers with the opportunity to develop people to required standards, to achieve consistent outcomes, and to develop more in-house programmes (Blackman *et al.*, 1993).

Other incentives are specific to particular sectors. In the retail sector, for example, increases in training have been prompted by the need to respond to changing customer needs and to comply with customer-driven quality requirements (Doogan, 1992).

One research report concludes that the force of regulation has protected training from the economic cycle, arguing that employer-provided training has often been increased more to comply with outside regulations than to upskill the workforce. The report warns, however, that this kind of training may do little to assist in the development of a higher skilled labour force (Centre for Labour Market Studies, 1993).

All the evidence suggests that organisational self-interest plays a key role in encouraging employers to provide training for groups of workers who have formerly received little. The research literature indicates, for example, that in the late 1980s, demographic change combined with the costs of recruitment and training, the need for more effective utilisation of staff, changes in a company's skills profile and the growing need for staff with social skills, led to more equitable training policies. One study revealed that employers were motivated to provide training for women employees when:

- they were working in shortage labour markets
- they were experiencing difficulty in finding high quality managers
- they had developed a strong culture favouring retention of good employees and a two-way concept of loyalty
- issues of equity and equal opportunities had a high profile in the organisation
- managers were personally committed to the issue
- there were political or 'image' reasons for retaining career women (Rajan and Van Eupen, 1990).

In organisations where such considerations are not paramount, however, and which are not undergoing or contemplating structural or technological change, increased or improved training may not be a priority.

Constraints on Provision of Training

No perception of the need for more or better training

There is abundant evidence that many employers do not believe they will reap the benefits from providing training since the workers concerned may use their enhanced skills to gain better jobs elsewhere. Moreover, some may consider further investment in training unnecessary and not cost-effective, particularly if it conflicts with a policy to keep costs low through competitive tendering and increasing use of part-time and temporary, low-skilled labour. Firms competing for contracts will also want to keep their costs to a minimum, and training costs are not usually built into tenders. Thus, as Blackman *et al.* (1993) have found, some managers view training more as a cost than a benefit:

> *If the structure and organisation of work in a particular organisation is not undergoing change then more training as a generalised prescription may make little sense. The organisation of work, and the structure of the organisation may be such that trainers are able to offer sufficient training to keep the skills of those in the organisation largely in balance. This depends upon training demands being essentially predictable and that incremental personal development is sufficient to meet any new skill demands ... Some companies may be able to survive in their particular environments by adopting strategies that revolve around competing on cost with low-paid, low-skilled labour and other small firms may revolve around the skills of one or two individuals* (Blackman *et al.*, 1993: 113 and 115).

The current position of a company therefore has a strong bearing on the amount and nature of the training provided, as does the overall economic context in which it has to operate. Ryan and Vause Associates (1993) found that identification of employee training needs in some organisations in Oldham had reached a standstill because of 'overwhelming breadth of need and no pressing economic obligation to act immediately'.

Short-termism

Several analyses find that employer training in Britain is driven more by reaction to the immediate situation than by long-term aims (Skills and

Enterprise Briefing, 20/92). According to Finegold (1992) this tendency is reinforced by financial policy and practices:

> *The dominance of the stock market and short-term lending practices of banks have led companies to concentrate in meeting quarterly profit targets and maximising immediate return on investment. The pressure towards short-termism in the 1980s has been intensified by the deregulation of financial markets and increase in hostile takeovers.*

Finegold argues that in small and medium-sized British companies, the nature of links between buyers and suppliers also reinforces the stress on short-term goals, with competitive pricing the main priority:

> *Relations between firms have – with some important exceptions – commonly been at arm's length, where price rather than quality is the main criterion and contracts may be terminated with little notice, discouraging small firms from investing in the skills of their workforce. The introduction of Japanese sub-contracting practices which focus on much closer, longer-term relationships and the exchange of information and expertise, have driven some small suppliers to transform their organisations and upgrade their training investment, but these cases are still the exception.*

In some areas, the drive to make quick profits automatically precludes attention to training. Blackman *et al.* (1993) identified this tendency in the clothing industry, where people sometimes set up in business for a short period to make as much money as possible then sell or wind up the company.

Inconsistency in training policy

The tendency to react to immediate circumstances rather than to pursue a long-term training strategy can lead to contradictions between company training policy and actual practice. Blackman *et al.* (1993) cite the example of one company with a strong policy on training where pressures for production had led to the progressive 'paring back' and cancellation of scheduled training activities and redundancies of some training staff. As a result, most training occurred on-the-job immediately prior to volume build: 'Senior managers willed the end but not the means and reverted to seeing training as expendable in the face of immediate pressures for production.' According to the authors of this study, such inconsistencies send a signal to the workforce that training is marginal and unimportant (Blackman *et al.*, 1993: 102–103).

In some enterprises with a strong commitment to training, central messages are failing to trickle down to branch level where line managers have relative autonomy in terms of the extent and nature of training provided to individuals and groups of employees. This also leads to a situation where policies on training are contradicted in practice. Fielder, Rees and Rees (1991), for example, found that centrally initiated, proactive training can sometimes be in conflict with other departments. They cite the examples of a grocery retail organisation where increased emphasis on training was resisted by individual store managers who were unwilling to release workers for training sessions, and an electronics firm with a strong central commitment to training, where all training which was not induction and task-related had to be fought for by individual employees. As this suggests, the attitudes and perceptions of managers play a determining role in decisions about the nature and amount of training offered to employee groups.

The groups most deprived of training are often those which suffer most from changes in or contradictions of training policy. For example, the Confederation of British Industry, one of the main supporters of Opportunity 2000, which seeks to improve the position of women at all levels in companies, argued in a recent report that rising unemployment has reduced the need for employers to concern themselves with attracting previously under-represented groups into the labour force and improving their skill levels: 'Clearly some of the business arguments for accessing and advancing previously excluded groups and for increasing training have become less relevant ... The demographic timebomb has been defused' (Clement and MacIntyre, 1993).

Training not valued by senior staff

Blackman *et al.* (1993) quote CBI (1992b) survey findings that:

- 59 per cent of employer training was not part of a longer-term development programme
- 50 per cent of supervisors had received no training in the past year
- 90 per cent felt that training did nothing to increase productivity
- 60 per cent found training did not improve their section's performance.

Some analysts have attributed employer ambivalence towards provision of training to their own lack of it. Citing the fact that only 20 per cent of senior managers in the UK have degrees compared with more than 60 per cent in France and Germany and 85 per cent in Japan and the US, Finegold (1992) points out that the managers responsible for making decisions on firms' skills requirements are often themselves poorly educated and

trained. This may partly explain the scepticism of some managers about the benefits of training and its links with productivity.

Blackman *et al.* (1993) also suggest that the low status of trainers in British firms and the minimal financial rewards offered to them may contribute to negative attitudes towards training.

Scepticism about the value of qualifications

The evidence suggests that many employers neither offer clear career ladders to their employees nor recognise and support routes to qualifications, and that a large number are not yet persuaded of the value of NVQs and systems of accreditation of prior learning. In their study of attitudes to training, Fuller and Saunders (1990) observed a significant difference between employers' and employees' perceptions of the value of qualifications. The researchers argue that qualifications need to represent both 'use value' (accurately indicate an individual's competence) and 'exchange value' (have a wider currency to enable the holder to exchange qualifications for a better job or training). They found that employers place more importance on use value and employees on exchange value. This analysis was confirmed during the present study, which revealed considerable employer scepticism about the value of qualifications. The comment of a training officer in a large retail company was typical of a general attitude: 'Experience in a multiple retailer is as valuable as a piece of paper to us. That is the most valuable and transferable.'

Although many employers are now committed to National Vocational Qualifications, others are not yet convinced of their value and are not therefore 'selling' it to their employees. The most common criticisms are that the standards are too narrow and irrelevant, the costs of registering and assessment are too high (particularly for smaller companies) and that implementation involves too much bureaucracy. Some complain that common standards are not of equal relevance to all employers in an industry, although this problem has to some extent been solved by making some units mandatory and others optional within the standards. Another problem identified is that the nature of the qualification, may in certain cases, contradict the general direction in which some companies are moving:

> *Companies saw the narrow task-centred NCVQ model as focused too much on the past. As a result, many were wrestling with conflicting ideas as to production. The compartmentalism and unitisation of the NCVQ approach was understood as being in direct opposition to the new production processes such as Just In Time philosophy and Total Quality Control, which gave workers*

> *greater responsibility and influence rather than restricted the individual worker operation. One consequence of Just In Time and other parallel philosophies of production has been the increased visibility of production processes within the workplace, enabling employees to make connections between the work they do and their relationship within the firm to other teams, cells, units or departments* (Blackman *et al.*, 1993: 53).

The literature as a whole suggests that a number of other factors have also impeded the spread of NVQs:

- the competence-based approach is not compatible with some knowledge-based, in-house training schemes
- the qualifications are not relevant across sectors and industries and therefore not transferable
- similar jobs across different industries do not command the same level of NVQ recognition
- some companies have experienced difficulties in negotiating with the awarding bodies
- the qualification has not been sufficiently promoted among employers and the working population.

Manager perceptions and attitudes

Several assumptions which appear to be widespread among managers have an adverse effect on the amount of training offered to particular groups of employees. These are: that it is not worth training older workers; that there is no need to provide more training for people in low-level jobs, and that people working less than full-time are less than committed to the job. Ambivalent attitudes to 'atypical' workers are still much in evidence and many analysts comment on the persisting belief that only working long hours represents serious commitment to a job and merits career success. Findings from an Institute of Management survey, for example, indicate that many women working part-time do not achieve their full potential because of the mainly male belief that management is a full-time job (Employment Department, 1993b). As Cameron notes: 'Unless flexibility is endorsed by the Board and becomes an integral part of the career process, there will continue to be a two-tier version which ends in the "glass ceiling" ' (Cameron Woods Associates, 1992).

Attitudes to atypical workers tend to go together with misplaced assumptions about women employees' commitment and capabilities. Research by the Institute of Manpower Studies found that differential access to training, development and promotion opportunities is likely to originate

from the views of management about the attitudes of male and female employees:

> *There is clearly a gap in understanding between women returners and managers which results in the view that women working part-time no longer have career ambitions – an inaccurate perception for women working at a professional level* (Bevan and Thompson, 1992: 75).

This perception is also inaccurate for women working at lower levels. An Employment Department document argues that employers under-rate the ambitions of secretaries and clerical staff, citing reports showing that two-thirds of such staff would be interested in development training (Skills and Enterprise Executive, Issue 6/92). Nevertheless, a number of reports and surveys indicate that employers are often only prepared to train part-time (and women) employees for their current job level and are reluctant to provide them with developmental training to help them move up through the system.

The Women's National Commission believes that women's prospects in the workplace:

> *have been damaged both by the assumption that they will leave work for family reasons and by the false notion that what they learn from family life is of little value to their working lives* (The Women's National Commission, 1992: 51).

Although such findings are typical throughout the literature on training, there is evidence of a certain lack of awareness and indeed indifference towards them among employers. In their review of training opportunities for women in the Norfolk and Waveney district, Sanderson and Turner (1992: 9) remark: 'It is a useful rule of thumb that women have the most problems in organisations that claim that women have no problems at all. Equal opportunities are most problematic in organisations that claim that an equal opportunities policy is not necessary because "we treat everybody equally here" '.

Practical problems

There are also, however, some important practical problems which inhibit employers from providing training for all their employees.

Pressures of production

There can be a tension between work pressures and training. As Fuller and Saunders (1990) point out, work practices are typically organised to meet production targets and organisational priorities and this leads to a

lack of time within work schedules for training. Many employers mention difficulties in providing training for employees who work shifts and 24-hour rotas, and for part-time and temporary employees who are brought in to cover peak periods. Providing cover can be a particular problem for small organisations, where time off for training may mean the absence of 50 per cent or 100 per cent of the workplace (Tuckett, 1991). Simkin and Hillage (1992) report that one employer found that the biggest disadvantage in employing part-time workers was the difficulties experienced in arranging for new recruits to have sufficient time to participate in training:

> *As a large employer, a period of block training formed part of staff's induction. All training was carried out full-time and this was made clear to recruits upon appointment ... However, the period between training blocks designed for private study were proportionately less for part-time staff which affected their capacity to develop the necessary skills* (Simkin and Hillage, 1992: 23–24).

Costs

The costs of training are also mentioned by many employers. Finegold (1992) asserts that in Britain these are not shared in a way that encourages investment in education and training. In the case of the training of technicians and supervisors, for example, a large proportion of costs falls on employers and individuals, whereas in France and Germany the state covers much off-the-job training.

From an employer's point of view, training part-time workers may be particularly costly. In their case studies of family-friendly employment practices, Simkin and Hillage (1992) point out that the need to train all staff irrespective of the hours worked involves both direct and indirect costs to the employer. The time spent away from work on off-the-job training means that part-time staff spend a proportionately greater percentage of their working time engaged in 'non-productive' activity. Even when there is recognition of the value of training, there can be a tension between providing it and the need to keep costs as low as possible. Doogan (1992) found that in the highly competitive retail sector, contradictory pressures are exerted on corporate personnel policy: the need to raise the calibre and competence of the workforce and at the same time to keep (unit) labour costs down.

The cost barrier particularly affects smaller firms. British surveys consistently reveal that small businesses often lack the resources to develop internal training courses and experience problems with the costs, quality

and accessibility of external training (Skills and Enterprise Briefing, 20/92).

There are a number of factors, therefore, which limit the amount of training provided by employers, and the move towards low skilled, part-time labour is in some ways reinforcing their impact. At the same time, according to Finegold (1992), the use of low-skill forms of work organisation sends signals to employees that it will not benefit them to invest in higher level skills.

Factors Which Influence the Take-up of Training

Motivation to undertake training will be strongly influenced by people's experience of the training offered and their assessment of its value as a means to job acquisition and satisfaction.

Although the Employment in Britain preliminary findings reveal a generally high interest in training among the workforce (Gallie and White, 1993), this apparently has not been translated into collective demands for it. While reports indicate that training tends to have a higher profile in organisations with a unionised workforce, Finegold (1992) claims that British unions have not generally made training a key priority in bargaining and have therefore been virtually eliminated from the education and training policy-making process. Moreover, a large section of the workforce do not show great enthusiasm for training and neither want nor expect to get it (Fuller and Saunders, 1990; Gallie and White, 1993). These tend to be workers without qualifications in low-grade jobs, who have received little or no formal training. Their low participation in training cannot be attributed to any single cause. Studies of adult non-participation in education and training have shown that it tends to result from a number of mutually reinforcing practical and attitudinal barriers (McGivney, 1990).

Training in Britain (Training Agency, 1989) has identified the principal barriers as lack of time, training costs, fears about job security, lack of employer support and lack of prospects. The evidence informing the present study indicates that a number of other factors also significantly inhibit participation:

- lack of funded training opportunities for unskilled and semi-skilled employees, part-time workers and returners to the labour market
- lack of information and guidance on training opportunities
- lack of childcare facilities
- lack of cover for part-time workers
- constraints arising from women's position in the labour market

- cultural factors
- employee attitudes and perceptions.

Examination of these factors suggests that, in virtually every respect, women, whether in employment or potential returners to the labour market, experience the greatest range of constraints on their participation in training.

Training costs

The cost of training is the obstacle most frequently mentioned by those who are not offered training by employers. According to the National Commission on Education (1992), many people cannot pay the fees in advance and are worried about borrowing to cover the associated costs. DeBell (1992) has itemised the potential cluster of direct and indirect costs confronting individuals undertaking work-related training without financial assistance from employers, central or local government:

- training and course fees
- add-on costs such as books and equipment
- examination and registration fees
- childcare costs
- dependent relative care costs
- transport costs
- other costs arising from location, timing and duration of training
- the costs of physical access, training and technical support for people with special training needs.

The survey conducted in the Norfolk and Waveney area (DeBell and Davies, 1991) indicated that although many people were prepared to fund their own training, they were frequently deterred by the additional costs involved such as examination fees, bus fares and childcare. The costs of long certificated courses were obliging many people to take less useful short courses, but many were deterred even by the costs of these, particularly if full fee payment was required in advance. Women (43 per cent of interviewees) experienced particular financial problems. In many cases, they were in low-skill and poorly paid jobs and the family income was not sufficient to allow them to train for better jobs. Some experienced resistance from their partners to spending money on their own training and many did not feel they had the right to use family money on themselves.

Although tax relief is available for those undertaking NVQs at their own expense, the costs of NVQ assessment are high and may deter people on low incomes and women who are loath to use family budgets for their

own purposes: 'again and again the research team found that women placed family and children above their own training needs in managing family budgets' (DeBell, 1992: 9). Women are also less likely to borrow than men and have consistently taken out fewer Career Development loans. This has been attributed to their reluctance to saddle their families with debt and because of their awareness of their limited employment and salary possibilities (Payne, 1991).

Other sources of financial help are dwindling. Part-time students do not qualify for mandatory grant support and financial support mechanisms for adult learners such as local authority discretionary awards and fee concessions are gradually being eroded.

Time constraints

Many part-time workers working irregular or unsocial shifts such as night work are 'invisible' and excluded from workplace training during regular working hours. Tight staffing policies and cost-cutting strategies such as contracting out, have further reduced the opportunities for such workers to train within working hours: 'Early morning cleaners with recent cuts in hours of work have much less time than before to meet and talk. They have more to do with less time to do it' (Mace, 1992: 3).

Many part-time workers also lack the time to undertake training outside working hours because they have more than one part-time job or, more often, because of their domestic commitments. A report on men and women in Europe (Kiernan, 1992) identifies women part-time employees as the most disadvantaged workers in the EC since they combine the major share of household duties with paid work. The same point is made in other studies, e.g. Mace and Yarnit (1987), DeBell and Davies (1991). The latter observe that although part-time work might appear to fit easily with training, for many part-time women employees, training outside working hours represents a third major commitment on top of managing both home and a job. The Watson and Fothergill study of part-time employees (1993) found that women cope with the double load by splitting their lives into separate compartments and any overlap between the two (such as training in own time) is resented. Part-time workers with family commitments can often only attend courses in the evenings when suitable provision is less likely to be available: 'If women are less able to attend day-time courses and evening provision is of a lower level and less vocational this will limit their access to qualifications' Metcalf and Leighton (1989: 70).

Lack of training provision

An obvious barrier to undertaking training is therefore the lack of opportunities. There is little point in exhorting people to undertake training if appropriate training opportunities are not available either in or outside of work.

Chapter 3 has already indicated the continuing dearth of training for many lower grade workers and the persisting disparities between groups of employees in the quantity and quality of training received. Metcalf and Leighton's (1989) findings – that many employers are biased against part-time employees, that there is a tendency to provide training on a full-time basis and that fewer women than men are offered day release for training – appear to be still generally true. The chances of reversing this situation may be slim at a time when many companies are continuing to reduce staffing, thereby putting added pressures on remaining employees.

Training opportunities outside work are also relatively limited. Many workers who seek training in their own time are constrained by the fact that large areas of vocational training are not delivered on a part-time basis. This, according to one analysis, is largely because of the costs involved: 'The overheads for providing part-time courses remain roughly the same as for full-time, but the funding is linked to the shorter hours involved. Thus the cost disincentive is a significant one and doubtless curtails the availability of part-time courses, severely limiting access to training for women with domestic responsibilities' (Equal Opportunities Commission, 1993: 65).

Training provision for women returners appears particularly sparse in relation to demand. Clarke (1991) comments on the paucity and short-term, temporary nature of many women-only training schemes, and a survey in East Anglia has found 'disappointingly little training provision which meets the criteria for women-friendly training' defined as training that meets at least two of the following criteria:

- time/location appropriate to carers
- no cost barrier
- tutor/trainer with awareness of equal opportunities
- courses which include careers counselling and/or confidence building
- marketing and recruitment geared to women (Sanderson, 1992: 14).

Constraints on TEC provision

Although many TECs have made efforts to meet women's training needs, their ability to continue providing suitable training has been questioned. In its report on publicly-funded vocational training in England and Wales, the Equal Opportunities Commission (1993) concludes that the greatest constraint on TECs in relation to equal opportunities is the omission from priority groups of those not registered as unemployed, as a result of which programmes and initiatives for returners are being curtailed. This problem is illustrated in the response to the enquiry from Hertfordshire Training and Enterprise Council (1992: 19) claiming that the TEC was under pressure from many organisations representing disadvantaged or under-represented groups and as a result: 'It is impossible to meet all their needs and often difficult to prioritise'. The TEC points out that the need to focus on the unemployed, and the long-term unemployed in particular, limits what can be provided for other groups.

The Equal Opportunities Commission (1993) identifies other constraints on TECs as: no priority attached to positive action programmes for women returners or for people who need upskilling or training in non-traditional areas; limits on the extent to which they can use resources to support employer initiatives, and the system of outcome related funding (ORF) which, by its very nature, discriminates against potential labour market returners:

> *Nearly all TECs alluded to the disincentive caused by the ORF payment system whereby a percentage of payments are paid only if providers meet certain targets. These targets vary from group to group and with returners, they would need to achieve both specific levels of NVQ and a subsequent job placement to earn ORF for the training provider. There is a natural temptation for providers to recruit the most financially attractive trainees and those presenting a double handicap such as returners may well suffer discrimination because of the ORF system. The fact that ORF also depends on ultimate job placements also militates against non-traditional training opportunities for both sexes* (Equal Opportunities Commission, 1993: 60–61).

Lack of recognition of unpaid work skills

Many 'back to work' schemes tend to consider labour market returners as beginners and without skills, despite their experience at home management and caring for other people. Although the National Council for Vocational Qualifications and national awarding bodies have policies supporting the accreditation of unpaid work competence towards their

awards, and research has demonstrated that the skills acquired in unpaid work are relevant to and overlap with those required in paid work (Rajan and Van Eupen, 1990; Leigh and Butler, 1993), women still experience difficulty in gaining employment that recognises their skills because of the rigid demarcation maintained between paid and unpaid work. Thus women who leave paid work and then wish to return are perceived as:

> *beginners, fresh starters or returners who need often quite lengthy courses to prepare them for paid work. It could be argued that those courses which are claimed to help women back into paid work actually depend on and reinforce a male model of employment where only paid work counts and where any other experience of work is deficient* (Leigh and Butler, 1993: 9–10).

The notion of accreditation for unpaid domestic work aroused widespread derision when it was recently (July 1993) given greater publicity, illustrating the extent to which unpaid work in the home is still undervalued.

Lack of information and guidance on training

Many analysts also comment on the lack of accessible information on education and training for adults and the complexity of the training routes and qualifications on offer. These factors may inhibit many people without qualifications and who lack confidence in their ability to learn from seeking training. Finegold (1992) also argues that for most occupations the jungle of qualifications and low skill differentials have combined to discourage individuals from investing in higher-level vocational or technical skills. Although the NVQ system seeks to remedy this situation, the research among employers and employees conducted for the present study suggests that, apart from firms where the qualification has been strongly promoted, the vast majority of employees below manager level have never heard of this qualification.

Lack of information and guidance on opportunities particularly affects those currently out of the labour market. Surveys of labour market returners, for example, repeatedly show that one of the principal difficulties they have in returning to training and the labour market is the lack of careers guidance and information on opportunities. One research report found that there were no clear routes which labour market returners could take to find and adjust to paid employment and many women were frustrated by the lack of information and support to aid their transition to work (Ryan and Vause Associates, 1991). While there are a few TEC-supported information and training centres specifically for returners, these are not yet provided in all areas.

Lack of employer support

A further barrier to women's participation in training and development is lack of employer support. A study of women in, or seeking, work by Oldham Training and Enterprise Council concluded that very few local employers offered any support to working women or realised what support options were available (Ryan and Vause Associates, 1991). Similar findings were reported by Rajan and Van Eupen (1990), whose study of women re-entering paid employment after a career break found that only 14 per cent of employers had addressed the specific needs of returning mothers and these were concerned more with commercial objectives than with helping women manage the re-entry process.

Although some positive action training schemes to help women returners have been initiated by employers, Pollert and Rees (1992) comment on their small scale and isolated character relative to the size of the host organisations, and the fact that any potential benefits are undermined by the failure to change the prevailing workplace culture. Moreover, many such schemes were set up at a time when the demographic downturn was causing worry about recruitment. Many firms have since reduced their labour force and abandoned positive action programmes for specific groups of workers. Others which have developed equal opportunities policies often contradict them in practice. A recent survey in Scotland revealed that although a significant proportion of the 156 largest employers claimed to have an equal opportunities policy, only a quarter had put it on paper and less than a fifth actually distributed copies to employees. Many policies like flexitime and enhanced maternity leave were only on offer to non-manual employees (*Everywoman*, 1993).

Lack of childcare

Many analysts assert that the biggest single obstacle to women's participation in training outside working hours is lack of childcare. Virtually all surveys of women and training indicate that lack of organised childcare facilities creates an acute barrier to participation in training for many women part-time workers and potential returners to the workforce. Interviews conducted for Chwarae Teg (1992) with nearly 800 women aged between 25 and 49 indicated that 88 per cent of those not in training would enrol in training courses if childcare were available and 78 per cent of women in training felt that lack of childcare would make full-time work difficult. In the Leeds survey of teachers and in-service training, childcare responsibilities accounted for a significant number of women not applying for courses.

Employee attitudes and perceptions

Although the practical barriers which militate against participation in training are numerous and varied, one of the biggest obstacles to the achievement of the lifetime education and training targets is likely to be negative attitudes to and perceptions of training among individuals. The view of training as irrelevant and appropriate only for younger workers or for those in high status jobs is widespread. For many, this view is based on observation and personal experience.

No perceived connection between training, qualifications and career mobility

Commitment to training and gaining qualifications is only likely if it is seen to offer genuine possibilities of career advancement. The experience of some groups of workers has led them to perceive training and qualifications as neither important in themselves nor integral to career advancement in the 'learning on job and proven ability culture' that prevails in many British firms (Fuller and Saunders, 1990). Many reports and analyses indicate that formal qualifications count for less with employers than experience, ability and willingness to put in the hours. Successful pursuit of National Vocational Qualifications within a firm depends heavily on managers' commitment to them and persuasion of their worth. In companies where the qualification is not highly rated by managers and is not integral to training and career advancement, it is unlikely that many employees will have the incentive to pursue the qualification.

Fuller and Saunders (1990) found that lack of a perceived connection between training, qualifications and career progression was a major disincentive to participate in training. They identified unskilled and semi-skilled employees without educational or vocational qualifications, and within these groups, women and older workers, as the workers most resistant to the notion of formal training. Many of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers interviewed were unable to relate the concept of training to the kind of jobs they were already performing without benefit of training, or to associate it with better performance or promotion. The majority of women in the sample had jobs which were not regulated by external qualifications (e.g. production or assembly work and retailing) and they could not see the point of training: 'Formal training leading to qualifications has never been part of their experience but is associated with careers (e.g. professional and skilled)' (Fuller and Saunders, 1990: 6).

Many of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers in Fuller and Saunders' sample were also employed in firms organised on a rigid hierarchical basis, where there was little chance of progressing beyond a certain level.

This situation has now spread to other groups of workers. In the last decade the restructuring of many organisations, involving a 'flattening' of hierarchical structures, has eliminated internal progression routes. Thus unqualified employees are at a double disadvantage: in internal labour markets the chances for promotion are dwindling and in the open labour market they 'may find that the exchange value of experience is less certain than the possession of an externally recognisable qualification' (Fuller and Saunders, 1990: 8).

Fear of redundancy

Some recent reports indicate that the recession and rising unemployment have had a negative impact on attitudes to training and that employees are demoralised and worried at times of reorganisation and change. Those who have received little or no training throughout their working lives may be wary if some is suddenly offered to them, suspecting that it may be a preparation for redundancy. In organisations where redundancies are being planned, there will understandably be little interest in embarking upon a new qualification: 'The company was shrinking and fear of the "Friday tap" – the sign that you were being laid off – led to apathy about undertaking NVQs, particularly amongst workers who had been with the company for a long time' (Blackman *et al.*, 1993). The fear of redundancy is particularly strong among less secure, part-time or temporary workers and those with basic skills needs. Training leading to a qualification such as an NVQ requires workers to have basic literacy and numeracy skills. However, reports suggest that some employees are reluctant to reveal their basic skill needs through fear of setting themselves up for redundancy or stigmatising themselves by revealing inadequacies (Mace, 1992).

Perceptions that one is neither eligible for nor has a right to training

Some reports suggest that part-time and temporary workers do not expect to be offered training and fear the consequences of requesting it:

> *If a woman in insecure and low status employment allows herself to go on a course in worktime knowing that her job is not being covered, she also knows that she is offering her employer the opportunity to make the old excuse for cuts: 'we managed without you'. She looks dangerously dispensable. Secondly, and in contrast to this, the more low-paid the job, the more noticeable to others can be the absence of the worker* (Mace and Yarnit, 1987: 22).

Similar concerns affect part-time workers in higher status jobs. The Leeds survey of teachers and in-service training found that a number of part-time and temporary teachers (a high proportion of them women

returners needing updating) held back from applying for courses partly because applications were blocked at school level, but also because of their part-time or temporary status and the assumption that cover would not be available.

Negative experience and perceptions of education

Many people who left school at the earliest opportunity with no qualifications tend to place little value on education and training. Gallie and White (1993) found that people without educational qualifications were considerably less likely than those with qualifications to have received training; to want or expect it, or to finance their own training.

Cultural factors

Workplace culture in Britain has long been distinguished by sharp divisions between, for example, workers and management; shop-floor workers and supervisors; blue-collar and white-collar groups; male and female workers; full-time and part-time employees, etc. These divisions have been sustained and reinforced by differentials in pay and conditions and access to training and promotion. Such a culture encourages the less advantaged employee groups to develop norms of behaviour and shared attitudes which consolidate their separateness from those at the top of the working hierarchy. This leads to 'them and us' attitudes which have a bearing on perceptions of training:

> *Traditionally, 'solidarity' has been associated with working-class jobs in which workplace norms amongst the working group have been very strong. One effect may be to confirm insiders (members of the group) and accentuate outsiders (supervisors, office staff, etc.). This has a clear impact on training; we found that where this sort of tendency exists a negative training culture can develop because to engage in training is tantamount to breaking ranks. To appear enthusiastic about a management initiative is seen at worst as 'sucking up' or at best 'standing out'. Getting above oneself puts some off training* (Fuller and Saunders, 1990: 9).

Shift working can accentuate labour force divides. 'Them and us' attitudes have been observed, for example, among night workers.

Employee Development Schemes jointly initiated by unions and management and open to the whole workforce have been conspicuously successful in avoiding this problem and attracting hourly-paid workers.

Lack of self-confidence

Many studies have found that low-paid women workers lack the incentive to train because of a deep lack of confidence in their ability, often

compounded by fear of change, anxiety about supervising others, fear of increased responsibility and concern about causing marital disharmony (Fuller and Saunders, 1990). It has also been observed that women who do night shifts for a few years to accommodate their family situation sometimes get stuck in that pattern. They often work in solitude and find group training initially frightening. Fuller and Saunders (1990) and other researchers have found that single women and women from some Asian communities exhibit more positive attitudes towards training and qualifications, believing that they will give them a more secure position in the labour market.

Women's position in the labour market

The evidence overall suggests that people are most likely to invest time and perhaps their own money in training when they can expect to see some return on these investments. Many analysts argue that women's disadvantaged position in the labour market engenders low expectations and aspirations. Metcalf and Leighton (1989), Fuller and Saunders (1990), Lindley (1992) and Bailey (1992) all find that women's discontinuous employment patterns, low earnings and restricted range of occupations act as disincentives both to their full labour market participation and to their participation in training: 'Perhaps it is not surprising that many women are reluctant to spend time in formal training when experience tells them they will be under-rewarded' (Fuller and Saunders, 1990: 6).

The prognosis for an improvement in women's prospects is gloomy:

> *Women without jobs and with only poor jobs do not have effective access to training to enable them to get better jobs. Even if they do obtain training, access to continuing career-related training depends on adult and childcare provision to make it possible, good contractual conditions (especially regarding part-time work) to make it beneficial and open occupational structures, free of segmentation, to make it sustainable ... Discriminatory payment systems undermine women's initial return to employment and training and bias household decisions in favour of men working, and reduce the incentives to build up more human capital on which to base further career development* (Lindley, in Lindley (ed.) 1992: 195).

> *Because of their discontinuous labour market participation, there is less incentive for women to invest in skill acquisition and training, particularly since human capital depreciates rapidly when it is not being utilised. The willingness of women to invest*

in training to increase their market wage is ... affected not only by role specialisation and the division of labour within the household but also by the expectation that the return on such investments will be adversely affected by subsequent discrimination in both access to good jobs and wages ... Given that a major role is played by the depreciation of skill that occurs during periods of non-participation in explaining both female occupational attainment and earnings, there seems little likelihood of there being a major improvement in the economic status of women without there being a major reallocation of household duties within the family (Bailey, 1992: 4).

The actual and perceived obstacles to participation in training are therefore numerous and varied. Given their number and complexity, the question of encouraging and motivating the groups least provided with training to participate is a huge issue which will need to be comprehensively tackled if individuals are to be persuaded to take responsibility for their own development. Some of the changes that are necessary to bring about an increase in training provision and participation are considered in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Extending Provision and Take-up of Training

This chapter looks at the changes that will be needed in order to meet the Lifetime Targets. These involve a combination of practical changes and attitudinal shifts, notably among those in a position to fund and provide training.

The Employment Department has stated that the achievement of the National Training and Education Targets will require more action from employers; increased training for groups such as older and part-time workers; more investment in training by small firms; more provision of training leading to qualifications; regular reviews of training needs and opportunities for the whole workforce; and dissemination to all employees of information about training activities and sources of funding (Employment Department, 1992a). However, changes in employer behaviour will depend largely on the extent to which the obstacles outlined in Chapter 4 can be overcome.

Employer Action

Changing attitudes and assumptions

Given the dramatic increase in flexible working, its advantages for both employers and employees and evidence that both men and women prefer shorter working hours (Watson and Fothergill, 1993), it seems incongruous that many of the workers involved should still be penalised by poor training and career development: 'Combining part-time work with career development is likely to be a key issue for the future' (Hirsh *et al.*, 1992: 6).

Attitudes and perceptions play a significant, indeed decisive, role in determining the extent of both the offer and take-up of training opportunities. Much of the available evidence suggests that to meet the Lifetime Targets will require a profound shift in managerial attitudes, particularly towards part-time and casual workers and women employees. In her survey of employers, McGwire (1993) observed that the progress and development of part-time workers is inhibited more by managers' attitudes than by any practical impediments. She argues that measures to help working women such as creches, career breaks and flexible working hours, however welcome, will not achieve any real changes in British workplace culture unless attitudes and assumptions are changed.

The main assumptions that need to be challenged are:

- *Older workers cannot be trained.* A recent survey (referred to on BBC Radio 4 *PM* News Bulletin, 5 August 1993) found that 40 per cent of employers hold this view, which has particularly negative consequences for women returning to the labour market after long career breaks to raise families.
- *Part-time or temporary working automatically reflects a diminished commitment to work.*
- *Part-time employees are not interested in training and development.* This view, which is sometimes used to justify not offering part-time workers training, is based on the assumption that part-time workers lack career aspirations. This is contradicted by Watson and Fothergill's (1993) study and surveys which have identified a strong demand for training and development among different groups of part-time employees.
- *Part-time workers have low skill levels.* Many labour market returners have advanced skills but, because of lack of childcare, are obliged to work restricted hours close to home, under-utilising expensive skills and training: 'We must not lose sight of the fact that a lot of the current workforce are highly trained and skilled but working in part-time jobs where these skills are not used. The flexible shelf-stacker may well be a trained nurse' (Rogers, 1988: 82). This situation is exacerbated at times of high unemployment when, according to Mace (1992), many manual workers may have qualifications far beyond the requirements of the job. She warns against assuming that because people are in low status jobs they have low levels of literacy or intelligence.
- *Part-time workers have free time to devote to training.* Pointing out that many have a double workload, Clarke (1991) stresses the importance of offering part-timers equal access with full-timers to training during working hours.
- *There is no need to offer more than induction training or informal on-the-job training to large sections of the workforce.* Employers will need to be persuaded that: 'a period of initial training no longer provides a sufficient skills base (if it ever did)' (Institute of Personnel Management, 1990: 5). Some will also need to be persuaded of the value to employees of qualifications: 'If there is to be mass training take up, a new qualification structure will need to bring together both use and exchange value in order for employees and employers to back it' (Fuller and Saunders, 1990: 10–11).

It is not easy to achieve changes in deep-seated attitudes and assumptions. Behaviour resulting from those attitudes and assumptions can only be changed by persuasion, incentives or regulation.

Arguments for extending training to the whole workforce

Developing a higher skilled national workforce

It is frequently argued that the skills of all employees will need continuous improving and updating if we are to develop the more skilled and flexible workforce required to keep up with labour market changes and make Britain more competitive in world markets:

> *Meeting rapidly changing skill requirements requires a lifetime learning approach with employees of all ages being developed* (Skills and Enterprise Briefing, 1993b).

> *Future training needs can be met on the scale required only by building training capability into the workforce at all levels* (Blackman *et al.*, 1993: 2)

However, general exhortations to British industry to train and upskill all employees may, like arguments based on social justice, carry little weight. Many employers will need to be persuaded that it is in their firm's best interests to increase and improve training for all sections of their workforce. According to a training manager interviewed for this project: 'In my experience you will never sell anything to business unless they can see how it affects business.'

Creating a well trained and motivated company workforce

> *Treating atypical workers as second class citizens is not conducive to creating the high trust work environment and committed workforce that many employers now seek and which is often seen as the key to competitive success* (Dickens, 1992: 32).

Analysts argue that it is short-sighted and not good business sense to restrict training to full-time workers when part-time and temporary employment has become such an important element of the British labour market, and to male employees when women are expected to account for over 85 per cent of projected employment growth during the 1990s and the first years of the next century (Employment Department, 1992a).

Research conducted on behalf of BRS Taskforce has indicated that businesses can lose both money and customer goodwill by using temporary drivers who are not adequately trained (Employment Department, 1992b). The examples of other firms show that extending training and

other benefits to part-time and temporary workers leads to less staff turnover and better quality results and products:

> *There is a tendency to view atypical workers as marginal or 'peripheral' to an organisation, yet atypical workers may in fact be core to the success of the enterprise ... Employers can ... gain through having a better trained, better motivated atypical workforce with less turnover* (Dickens, 1992: 32).

Some employers have recognised these benefits. In an article entitled 'Part-time – not second best' Boots the Chemist in Newcastle outlines the gains brought by this section of their workforce:

> *Part-timers, particularly women returners, play a strategic role in the development of the business. The greater maturity and experience they bring with them is seen as an enormous asset in terms of customer service – complementing the qualities of younger members of the team. More mature members of staff also play a crucial role in acting as mentors to less experienced employees* (National Council for One Parent Families, 1992).

The Women's National Commission (1991) also points out that labour market returners represent a settled and stable section of the workforce (a view strongly affirmed by a number of managers interviewed during the case studies conducted for the present study).

The Employment in Britain research indicates that workers who have been offered training and development opportunities tend to have more loyalty and commitment to their employer:

> *Organisational commitment was strongly related to the opportunities for personal development. It was stronger among those who felt that their skills were properly utilised, those who reported that training provision had increased and was available in the future and those who felt that the best path to a better job lay in staying with their current organisation* (Gallie and White, 1993: xi)

The research literature suggests that career break schemes which enable employees to maintain links with the organisation through work placements and retraining during the break have helped a number of employers to retain well-qualified and committed employees.

There is also evidence that a reputation for good training and equal opportunities can have positive spin-offs in terms of recruitment. A book on 'women-friendly' firms gave good publicity to the companies named and one subsequently received 'many enquiries from young men and

women who wanted to work in that type of environment' (McGwire, 1993).

Remedying identified skill shortages

> *The emerging skills shortages in the 1990s will require dramatic changes in employment policies or job redesign, training and career developments ... Employers who do not implement policies that run with the grain of social developments will be increasingly disadvantaged in the labour market at a time of generalised skills shortages* (Rajan and Van Eupen, 1990: 36).

Several surveys have found that the skill levels required by average employees have substantially increased, largely because of the introduction of new technology (*Employment Gazette*, February 1993; Gallie and White, 1993). There has been a marked growth in demand for workers with management, administrative, professional and technical skills, and British employers have identified a range of urgent skills needs which can only be met by training and retraining. One survey has identified the new skills required by employees as being predominantly in three areas: technical skills (including multiskilling), information technology skills and personal skills (including attitudes and communications) (Payne, Forrester and Ward, 1992b).

The need for improved basic and communication skills is increasingly stressed. A national survey of employers by the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit revealed a strong demand for improved oral communication skills, with one in four respondents claiming that the basic skills of job applicants were poor (*Education*, 1993). Workbase Training has also detected a need for improved communication skills among manual workers: 'This type of training is essential if these employees are to have access to national vocational qualifications and cope successfully with the job changes following introduction of new technology and the pressures created by competitive tendering' (Abbey, 1990: 21).

Workbase research has revealed that NVQ training and assessment requires a considerable amount of literacy and communication skills:

> *Despite the principle of* NVQ *being based on experience, every qualification needs an element of literacy that must be addressed initially. Addressing foundation communication skills is the key to open many doors causing concern to employers and trades unions, wishing to pursue a necessary but challenging training path. Good communication skills are essential for flexibility and allow companies to deploy resources to meet performance targets* (Workbase Training, 1993).

A consistent feature of recent surveys and research reports is their stress on the importance of a wider skills base at a time when British policy initiatives seem over-focused on narrow skilling (Steedman, Mason and Wagner, 1989). As one report argues: 'the pace of industrial and technological change, coupled with major uncertainties, means that the key attributes of workers will be more general' (Blackman *et al.*, 1993: 2). There is wide agreement on the nature of these attributes. They have been described as: 'a willingness to learn, ability to work as a member of a team, ability to transfer existing skills and knowledge to new situations' (Blackman *et al.*, 1993: 2), and as an employee's: 'overarching capabilities: the outlook, understanding and ways of working which promote people's effective contributions and facilitate organisational change in appropriate directions (e.g. problem-solving, creativity, flexibility, business thinking, taking responsibility)' (The Prospect Centre, 1991). Gallie and White (1993) and Rees (1993) refer to the fundamental and growing importance, alongside technical skills, of 'social' skills which encompass many of the attributes described above:

> *Increasingly new information technology (NIT) skills are required alongside social skills, known in Germany as the 'new pedagogics'. These include a capacity for abstract thinking, team-working, self-reliance, enhanced communication skills, diagnostic skills, a greater degree of responsibility. Training for NITs now needs attention paid to training in social behaviour, group work and communication* (Rees, 1993: 22).

Analysts are virtually unanimous, therefore, in seeing wider skills as essential to keep pace with the rapid changes in employment structures and in the organisation and nature of work.

Keeping within the law

Since the vast majority of part-time workers are women, exclusion of part-timers from training may be against the law. Access to training is covered in Sections 14 and 16 of the Sex Discrimination Act, which states that an employer must not discriminate when a person applies for or undergoes training in the terms on which access to or facilities concerned with training are provided; by refusing or deliberately omitting to afford access to training; by terminating the training; or by subjecting employees to any detriment during training. Discrimination includes direct sex discrimination or indirect discrimination 'where there may be no intention to discriminate, but where a specific requirement may disadvantage one sex more than another'. Exclusion of part-time or temporary workers from training or denying them access to information on training and development may well fall into this category.

Increasing training

For many employers, arguments for increasing training to all employees will need to be supported by suggestions on how to maintain a balance between training and the daily operational demands of the workplace, and how to finance training when factors such as scarce resources, high interest rates and increased competition require them to keep costs as low as possible. The shift towards competitive tendering, for example, militates against increased investment in training since any action by individual employers would need to be paralleled by changes of attitude and practice among the firms from which they seek contracts. Blackman *et al.* (1993) suggest that this problem might be avoided if customers insisted that training costs be included in the tendering price. The resulting quality gains would be in the customer's own interest.

Other strategies for increasing or improving training might be through:

Sharing costs

The establishment of Lifetime Targets raises the question of how smaller firms with few resources can invest in more or better training. One suggestion has been that the Training and Enterprise Councils and their equivalent in Scotland might help small firms by establishing 'one-stop-shop' forms of local training delivery or helping to set up group training schemes to share the costs (*Skills and Enterprise Briefing*, 20/92). The success of Workbase initiatives in south London in developing an Open Learning Centre and customised training for small businesses (see Chapter 6), demonstrates the effectiveness of this approach. The sharing of costs is also advocated by NIACE (1993), which refers to the role of the Industrial Training Boards in the development of group training arrangements which have enabled a number of small companies to gain collective access to a professional personnel manager and share costs. Finegold (1992) quotes findings that co-operative organisations that encourage firms to share the costs of training, technology diffusion, export marketing, etc. have been crucial to the development of successful 'clusters' of high-skill, high value-added companies.

Collaborating with other bodies

As this implies, collaboration may be the key to improved training arrangements in smaller firms. NIACE (1993) has suggested that the targets will be difficult to reach without partnerships and collaboration, for example between employers, TECs, unions, further education colleges and voluntary organisations. The NIACE policy discussion document *The Learning Imperative* cites as a positive example of collaboration the venture between the TUC and South Thames TEC, 'Working in Partnership for Quality Training at Work', which has as one of its aims to

improve the training opportunities open to all employees, especially women and part-time workers: 'Without such collaborative activity, the targets would be difficult to reach' (NIACE, 1993: 40).

Other reports advocate closer links between employers and bodies such as careers or educational guidance services, further education colleges and women's training centres, to help employers and job-seekers to find, respectively, suitable recruits or suitable jobs or work placements. The Dow Stoker survey in Hampshire (1991) also recommends collaboration between education and training providers and employers in organising short refresher programmes to keep labour market returners in touch with the workplace, to upgrade and update their skills and make them aware of opportunities.

There is evidence that collaborative activities which allow employers to share information and insights can lead to changing practice. The Personnel Executive of Southcoast World, a Butlin's leisure centre at Bognor Regis which has successfully introduced NVQs across all occupational areas, uses local TEC seminars and other events to promote NVQs to other companies. This has increased interest among managers of other firms (see Part Two).

Integrating new qualifications with in-house training

Organisations which have made NVQs available to all employees have been able to ensure consistent standards and, at the same time, increase the loyalty and commitment of staff. Introduction of NVQs appears to work best when: managers are strongly committed to the initiative; the idea has been well promoted among the workforce through meetings and written material; NVQs have been introduced initially on a small-scale; they are integrated into the company's in-house training structure and tailored to existing company circumstances and needs (Fennell, 1993).

Training trainers and 'key' workers

Blackman *et al.* (1993: 115) stress the crucial role of trainers in developing technical and job-specific skills and conveying messages about the value of taking up other education and training opportunities. They also stress the value of trainers' helping and supporting skills, defined as: 'reflective summarising, effective listening and giving constructive feedback', in achieving organisational goals and delivering NVQs. The authors argue that these qualities are only likely to be developed in companies which put a premium upon team-work, co-operative behaviour and continuous improvement, and that for employers to become 'learning organisations' three developments are necessary: employers need to introduce mechanisms for improvement of coaching and support skills; trainers need to demonstrate a continuing commitment to learning;

and the development of coaching expertise should be reflected in career advancement.

Extending training to part-time employees.

> *Changing working patterns require ... innovatory behaviour by training providers and enlightened self-interest by employers in recognising that concentrating training on their core employees ... will often be inadequate to meet their skill needs* (Training Agency, 1989).

Clarke (1991) suggests that open and distance learning packages offer an opportunity to include part-timers in continuing training. These, and on-site open learning centres, have been successfully introduced in some large banking, retail and manufacturing organisations and the case studies conducted for this study suggest that their use is becoming standard. Training through open and distance learning has increased in industry and commerce in recent years, a trend attributed by Woodley (1992) both to the growing need for retraining and updating and the cost-effectiveness of these types of learning. Woodley warns, however, that certain conditions are necessary if these approaches are to be successful:

> *It seems that shopfloor workers are being offered the opportunity of distance learning, either as a fringe benefit or as a means of encouraging workers to transfer into other employment or to seek further education – i.e. as a way to reduce the workforce. If this takes the form of sending off workers with a large correspondence course to study at home after a hard day's work it is unlikely to benefit the workers or the employers. What is required are specially written or tailored courses, time off work for study and fully integrated student support systems* (Woodley, in Calder (ed.), 1992: 124).

Training women employees and labour market returners

Successive reports (TUC, 1990; Clarke, 1991; Pollert and Rees, 1992) argue for training which recognises and adapts to the different career patterns of women. All reports on women and training argue that training provision should take women's domestic constraints into account. There is little point, for example, in expecting women with family commitments to undertake all their training in their own time, such as evening and weekends, and in places located far from their homes. The point is frequently made that training initiatives for women need to be part of a combination of measures including flexible hours, childcare initiatives and changes in organisational practices and culture. Pollert and Rees (1992) assert that a package of complementary measures emanating from

a general will to change an organisation is far more likely to succeed than any single strategy.

Where labour market returners are concerned, Rajan *et al.* (1990: 56–57) identify four models being used by a few 'leading edge' employers to help them manage the re-entry process:

- *the retraining model:* re-entrants trained by employers or the state in skills relevant to employability, specific occupations or individuals
- *the refresher model:* re-entrants provided with opportunities to update existing skills, particularly if they are returning to their former occupation in order to re-establish them at the same or equivalent level at which they withdrew from the labour market
- *the career advancement model:* re-entrants given skills supplementary to those used in their previous posts in order to allow progression into managerial/supervisory positions in specialist work areas
- *the prevention model:* withdrawal anticipated and prepared for through the setting up of mechanisms for maintaining contact with employers.

The researchers argue that returners need more than just induction training; they also need post-induction training and continuous training leading to greater career opportunities. They also recommend 'attitudinal training' for managers to give them greater insight into the position and problems of women employees.

Some researchers are aware of a tension between positive action programmes and an employer's wish to be seen to be fair to all employees:

> *Strategically, you have to be careful that what is on offer is available to all employees, not just women. One of the key issues is equal opportunities for everybody. There are male employees who don't fit the stereotypes. We should be creating a meritocracy within an organisation that allows everyone to develop* (personnel officer of a large organisation visited during the project).

This concern should not, however, lead employers to ignore the specific problems women labour market returners experience. These include not just practical difficulties but psychological ones arising from lengthy periods away from the workplace and societal undervaluing of women's unpaid work. A typical finding in courses developed for women returners is that, despite participants' diversity and range of skills, they all have a tendency to undersell themselves; to undervalue their experience; to

overlook the skills they had accumulated outside a paid work situation; and to aim lower than their ability levels (Morgan, 1991). Thus, as Metcalf and Leighton (1989) recommend, the major training needs of women re-entering the workforce are confidence-building and skill-updating. Many reports suggest that this kind of training could be provided through increased use of the provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act. Section 48 of the Act allows employers to provide women-only or men-only training to help redress any marked gender imbalance among those doing a particular type of work, while Section 47 permits positive action in training providing that certain criteria are met.

Researchers stress, however, that training programmes for women should not just aim to maintain the status quo (i.e. to keep them in the same employment position) but should also help them to develop and progress.

Accrediting unpaid work

Women without formal qualifications often have a wide range of skills acquired in the home and voluntary work. The former Secretary of State for Employment, Gillian Shephard, called for wider recognition of these: 'If the country is to meet the training targets which are intended to make sure that the skill base is firmly in place to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, it is essential that accreditation of unpaid work is achieved' (letter to delegates at the Second National Conference on Accreditation of Competence gained in Unpaid Work, London, 1993). This view is firmly upheld by Leigh and Butler:

> *The possibility of achieving the national education and training targets will be greatly enhanced when unpaid competence is given the credit due to it and when unpaid workers are counted in as part of the national workforce (Leigh and Butler, 1993: 1).*

The over-representation of women at NVQ level 1 would be rapidly changed if there were more opportunities to accredit the competences they have acquired in the course of their unpaid work. Development work supported by Hertfordshire TEC has proved that it is possible to substantially foreshorten skills training programmes for unpaid workers when Assessment of Prior Learning and Assessment of Unpaid Work are introduced alongside the more traditional learning programmes.

Combining basic education with training for manual workers

According to NIACE (1993), organisations employing people who have participated least in education and training will need to address the problem of a lack of learning confidence leading to slow skill acquisition. The benefit of providing basic education in the workplace, according to

Payne, Forrester and Ward (1992), is that, at a basic education level, the links between learning basic educational skills and the ability of a worker to benefit from training are much clearer than at other educational levels.

Some education practitioners argue that basic education provision should complement manual worker training schemes. Mace (1992), for example, recommends planned training programmes for all manual workers with short courses in applying for jobs and interview skills, introduction to computing and supervisory skills, management for first-line supervisors, communication at work and report writing. She suggests that the programme should be presented as a chance for staff to develop and discuss their uses of reading and writing in all these contexts, with an explicit welcome offered in publicity and training methods to those who experience difficulties with reading and writing. Some of these courses might be planned for discrete groups of workers, with location and timing arranged to fit with the work constraints and personal circumstances of those concerned.

Mace also recommends that the courses be negotiated with the workers concerned, ensuring that the information is expressed in a way that is free of any assumptions about workers' literacy competences: 'With this principle at work, those for whom literacy is a problem would be able to take part more readily and more equally in a range of opportunities.'

Encouraging employees to undertake training

Mace has found that it requires a careful and sensitive approach to encourage manual workers to take up offers of basic education training and she advocates literacy awareness programmes for managers to help them understand this. Workbase Training also stresses the importance of a sensitive approach. When working with a new organisation, Workbase trainers hold group discussions with employees to give them an opportunity to express their views, interests and requirements, and to help design the training course: 'People need endless reassurance. Groups sessions give them an opportunity to feel more valued' (interview with Workbase trainer). Similarly Holmes (1992) maintains that respect for employees' capabilities and views is essential to the achievement of positive attitudes to training: 'Employees are unlikely to take responsibility for their own development if they are never encouraged to take responsibility for anything else at work, and if their suggestions are ignored or treated with contempt.'

Workbase's experience in training manual staff, like that of Mace, demonstrates that courses which have the full support of line management, local union representatives and the employees' body tend to have a good take-up and lead to successful outcomes. Good examples of this

are management and union-initiated employee development schemes which are open to staff at all grades. In some organisations, these have had a very high participation rate by hourly paid as well as salaried staff, semi-skilled as well as skilled workers, women and ethnic minorities, leading to the erosion of 'them and us' attitudes. Employee development schemes such as the one at Ford have demonstrated the 'first time' effect often noted in adult education circles, whereby people, once motivated to participate in a programme of education or training, are stimulated to undertake more. Although such schemes involve non-work-related education, their major achievement is to have given employees, many of whom have never participated in post-school education or training, a positive attitude to education and a desire to learn. According to Blackman *et al.* (1993) such schemes not only break down barriers to and legitimise learning: they also have positive advantages for companies undergoing a process of procedural or structural change by helping to develop a well-motivated workforce, which:

> *by being constantly encouraged to learn new concepts, is able to react positively to coping with change in the working environment. The emphasis on the process rather than the outcome means that management are able to prepare their workers for change in a general rather than particular sense, since the exact nature of the change cannot be predicted. In such organisations, senior managements have decided that an innovative workforce is a strategic necessity* (Blackman *et al.*, 1993: 110).

Persuading staff that training is worthwhile

In order to encourage employees to undertake training, companies need to send workers very clear signals that it is important and will have benefits.

The literature cumulatively suggests that motivating staff to undertake training may require relatively simple measures such as provision of on-site training and time within working hours to train. Another incentive would be to offer promotion or financial rewards on completion of specific training programmes. In some firms, the achievement of NVQs or other qualifications is tied into pay structure. A key issue is credibility. It will be difficult to motivate people to undertake training and pursue qualifications if these are perceived to have no 'pay-offs' for the workers concerned and if there is a climate of uncertainty regarding job security in a firm. In such cases, workers will require considerable persuasion and reassurances from management that jobs are not at risk: 'A mass training policy will need to conceptualise the concerns, preoccupations and

priorities that will shape the main participants' responses to training policy' (Fuller and Saunders, 1990: 10–11).

Increasing managerial commitment to training

Any extension or improvement of training therefore requires the full commitment of senior management and mechanisms for ensuring action by other tiers of management. Without these two essentials, training policies may not go beyond written statements of intent:

> *Commitment from on top needs to be carried through to those who make decisions on hiring, firing and promotion further down, otherwise ... policies ... have no effect at all other than to invite complacency* (Pollert and Rees, 1992: 5–6).

> *It takes only one line manager to make it clear that part-time means partly committed for the (equal opportunities) policy to lose any practical meaning* (McGwire, 1993: 13).

Adopting a comprehensive training strategy

Thus the literature as a whole suggests that a combination of measures may be needed to raise the education and skills levels of the workforce. Successive reports have recommended that improved employer-provided training requires a range of strategies such as:

- a skills audit of existing staff
- analysis of skills needs and future training requirements
- the establishment of training objectives and targets for business and all employees
- codes of practice incorporating the idea of a right for all employees to a minimum number of days training within a specific period
- quality assurance systems for monitoring performance (including regular staff appraisals giving staff the opportunity to identify their own training needs)
- equal opportunities training and evaluation to enable training providers to become more aware of the training requirements of different groups of workers
- the linking of on- and off-the-job training to local and national arrangements for accreditation of learning
- systems for recognising achievement and assessing prior learning and experience
- the development of in-company guidance on education and training for workers, linked with the local network of services
- the introduction of the National Record of Achievement (NROVA) for all workers

- systems of wider human resource development to enable career progression and, where possible, horizontal development within a firm (Tuckett, 1991; Leeds City Council, 1992; NIACE, 1993).

Several reports, however, question whether voluntary action from employers will be sufficient to bring about a significant increase in training and there are suggestions that third-party intervention and more government subsidies to help with training fees may be essential if Britain is to meet the Lifetime Targets.

Government Action

Positive changes in employer practice will depend on their being persuaded that there are substantial returns to investment in training. Shackleton (1993), however, suggests that there are substantial obstacles to demonstrating the gains from training. He argues that some training (e.g. government programmes, training towards qualifications) does not enhance productivity but has other functions such as shortening job queues, social or political objectives such as reducing apparent inequalities in the workforce or disguising unemployment. Many research reports therefore foresee little change in employment practices relating to low qualified workers, 'atypical' and women workers unless there are accompanying policy initiatives (Lindley, 1992). The reluctance or inability of some employers to extend training to all their employees may only be altered by a combination of incentives and legal requirements, for example that public companies report what they spend on education and training in their annual reports (Finegold, 1992). As Dickens (1992: 62) observes:

> *Unless employers are required to act, set targets and explore why targets are not being met, they will not be pushed to confront the fact that the structures and processes of organisations themselves, rather than acts of individual prejudice or women's own inadequacies, underpin the current distribution of jobs and rewards, including the disadvantages of atypical working.*

At a European level, several recent directives on atypical work have been included in the Action Programme for implementing the Social Chapter: Health and Safety Article 118a requires temporary workers on fixed-term contracts and in seasonal work to be given the same information, training and protective equipment as permanent employees doing the same work. Another directive requires that all those working an average of more than eight hours a week be given a written statement of their conditions of employment (pay, hours of work and holiday entitlement) within eight

weeks of starting a job. Other directives (Articles 100 and 100a) to improve the position of atypical workers have yet to be accepted. These would give temporary and part-time workers working at least an average of eight hours a week the same rights and benefits, including training, as permanent full-time workers. However, these measures require unanimous support by the Council of Minsters.

In Britain, where the achievement of the National Targets is largely dependent on the extension of training to the growing army of part-time workers, there are several areas where government action might encourage the process.

Greater co-ordination of education, training and labour market policy

Finegold (1992) suggests that the progress of training in Britain has been slowed by lack of co-ordination between the government departments concerned:

> *The major actor capable of altering the incentives within the skills-creation system is the government ... (but) a major constraint has been the lack of co-ordination of education, training and labour market policy either within or between departments.*

Changes in policy priorities

Motivating people without qualifications to undertake education and training will be a major challenge to the achievement of the National Targets. The targets can only be viewed as realistic if there are efforts to involve low-skilled workers in education and training. Yet government-sponsored training schemes tend, paradoxically, to target and favour more highly educated and trained individuals who are most likely to achieve the desired outcomes. According to Finegold (1992), the use of single outcomes takes no account of the quality of intakes. This priority will need to be changed, and the remit of Training and Enterprise Councils broadened, if the Lifetime Targets are to be met. The National Commission on Education (1992: 10) also suggests that 'despite the obvious difficulties', some sort of employment guarantee for those undertaking training in line with the anticipated needs of the economy might be a useful stimulus to the unemployed to undertake training.

The research literature suggests that the ability of TECs to assist in the achievement of the Lifetime Targets would be considerably increased by:

- a discrete budget to support specific equal opportunity objectives
- modifications to outcome-related funding to help lower-qualified groups to participate in government schemes
- measurement of the performance of TECs and education and training providers in terms of value-added
- more priority to training provision for labour market returners
- ability to use funds to support employer initiatives to upskill employees such as workers with basic skill needs, part-time and temporary workers
- a remit to support training initiatives in small businesses.

Recognition of gender differentials in policy initiatives

Recent policy initiatives to improve the quantity and quality of employer training make no reference to the gender differentials in employment and training revealed throughout the research literature. Neither Investors in People nor the National Targets refer specifically to equality of opportunity in access to training, an omission which has led the Equal Opportunities Commission (1993) to suggest that any monitoring of progress of these initiatives should include an analysis to check on equality of access for women and men. One report argues that even Opportunity 2000, which was introduced specifically to improve the position of women in employment, is vague about the notion of 'cultural change' and evades references to issues such as sex discrimination in pay and grading structures. In 1991, only one subscriber had set targets for women's training or employment participation for the year 2000 as recommended by the CBI (Pollert and Rees, 1992).

Moreover, initiatives such as IIP and the National Targets refer largely to the employed workforce and therefore exclude women who have temporarily left the labour force. Although women returners are included in the most recent scheme for the adult unemployed, 'Training for Work', groups such as women in low-skilled, part-time or temporary jobs are excluded. It has also been suggested that the requirement for students to research the job market and produce a portfolio before enrolling on courses might be offputting for women who have been out of the labour force for some years (YHAFHE, 1993).

Nearly half of the 2.7 million women of working age who were out of the labour force for domestic reasons in 1991 had no qualifications (Equal Opportunities Commission, 1993). Since these women are expected to constitute a large proportion of the workforce in the foreseeable future, the lack of priority given to their training and qualification needs in government schemes and national training initiatives is surprising:

> *Labour Force Projections to 2001 still show that almost all of the projected net increase in the labour force will be among women, drawn largely from the population aged 35–54. It is the skill levels and training opportunities for women now in the 25–44 age-band which will be of key significance to the future economy of Britain. This is precisely the group of women who may currently face substantial difficulties in maintaining their position within the labour market, not least because of their caring responsibilities and a general lack of affordable childcare provision* (Equal Opportunities Commission, 1993: 3).

Training for women is a central feature of the EC Third Action Programme for Women 1991–1995. However, as Lindley and Wilson (1992) warn, without government intervention the costs of training may lead to increased discrimination against women in the British labour force.

Action on childcare

Many women cannot train or take full-time work because of the lack of accessible and affordable childcare. A consistent finding of the literature on working mothers is that the most common form of childcare is other family members, but a recent report for the DSS has revealed that a significant number of the poorest working mothers – lone parents – are spending a quarter of their income on child-minders (Marsh and McKay, 1993).

Although the government initiative to set up over 50,000 out-of-school childcare places throughout Great Britain has been widely welcomed, the well-known lack of publicly-funded childcare facilities in Britain remains a fundamental obstacle to women seeking employment and training.

Establishment of broader national education and training targets

A great deal of adult training and learning activities are unrecognised and unaccredited except by statements which reflect attendance rather than achievement (NIACE, 1993). However, the National Targets are tied very closely, some believe too closely, to NVQs. The achievement of the Targets, as currently defined, will depend heavily on the credibility of National Vocational Qualifications among employers and employees. This in turn depends on the benefits that the qualification is perceived to bring to both parties. As Fuller and Saunders (1990) suggest, employers and workers need to have a similar perception of the value of qualifica-

tions in order for them to be effectively embedded in a company's training structure.

The evidence reveals, however, that a number of employers are sceptical about the value of NVQs and many are deterred from introducing them because of practical problems and the costs involved. Additionally, the Lifetime Targets assume easy access to assessment but the research conducted for this project shows that this is often not the case. There is also an ongoing debate about whether the NVQ approach can achieve the flexibility and general transferable skills that will enable individuals to cope with rapid economic and technological change:

> *Only recently has it been realised that the initial focus on occupational competence in terms of tasks was much too narrow. Much development work has been sidetracked into looking almost exclusively at the development of job-specific skills. At best, this represents a 'codification of the past'; it does not address the requirements of the workforce of the future* (Blackman *et al.*, 1993: 2).

Plummer (1993) refers to the attitudinal changes required if NVQs are to become more widely accepted: 'It is easy to underestimate the conceptual leap that the NVQ system asks people to make. A whole set of deep-seated, often unconscious beliefs about learning and training, about "enabling" learners as opposed to catching them out with unseen exam questions, about the real meaning of competence, has to be changed before people can really take NVQs on board'.

Mullin (1993) argues that in changing from an academic-dominated to a competence-led system, we may be increasing the number of people who attain qualifications without actually being competent: 'Assessment is not the only guarantor of accuracy or effectiveness in awarding qualifications.'

There have, therefore, been calls for wider and more qualitative Lifetime Targets and a wider accreditation framework involving a system of credit accumulation and transfer which includes vocational and academic qualifications as well as forms of accreditation for achievement in more general curriculum areas. Tuckett (1991) also calls for greater recognition of the outcomes of general adult learning, citing the positive results of employee development schemes: 'The key point that employers recognise ... is that general, developmental learning leads to instrumental vocational outcomes and to invest in general education is to invest in vocational education' (Tuckett, 1991: 24).

Wider promotion of NVQs and government training initiatives

A survey of larger firms revealed that 63 per cent had heard of NVQs/SVQs and 33 per cent of National Records of Achievement and Training Credits; 25 per cent were aware of IIP and 20 per cent of National Targets (although this was a comparatively new initiative at the time of the survey) (Skills and Enterprise Briefing, 20/92). Research conducted for the present study has revealed that there is virtually no awareness of these initiatives among employees (although it is likely that the introduction of GNVQs in schools will increase general awareness of NVQs among the population). These findings indicate that initiatives such as NVQs and National Targets need far greater national publicity and promotion. Current campaigns to promote NVQs and IIP are therefore to be welcomed.

Several reports recommend tax incentives to encourage employers to work towards the IIP award, a process which was described as 'a major undertaking' by one employer interviewed for this study.

Increased financial assistance for individuals undertaking training

According to the National Commission on Education (1992), the development of a better qualified workforce depends, among other factors, on the introduction of client- or student-led funding mechanisms. Tuckett (1991) describes the encouragement of individuals to invest in their own learning as a key element in creating a learning society. However, the costs of training are high and groups who get the least employer-provided education and training tend to be those who are the lowest paid, such as female part-time workers. There are few sources of financial support available for individuals seeking their own training. NIACE (1993) comments on the unevenness of financial support for adult learners and trainees and calls for encouragement to employers to establish an earmarked budget for training; more tax incentives for individuals taking responsibility for their own training; and wider availability of financial support measures currently only available to the long-term unemployed, such as reimbursement of course fees, travel and childcare.

Although it is widely recognised that costs represent a major barrier to participation in training, there is little sign that the problem has yet been successfully addressed. Tax relief on courses leading to NVQs has been widely welcomed but the evidence suggests that neither women (Payne, 1991) nor the least qualified individuals (Tuckett, 1991) are likely to take advantage of this incentive in significant numbers. In the case of NVQs, therefore, take-up might be considerably increased if low income groups were offered free entry to training leading to the qualification.

Some analysts argue that employers and TECs need financial incentives to support training. One of the greatest needs identified is help for small businesses who lack the resources and capability to provide training and qualifications for all their workers. Finegold (1992) also suggests that government might offer financial help to employers for training of trainers, supervisors and qualified assessors, and financial incentives to TECs to enable them set up company membership schemes covering the main sectors in the local economy. These might operate with small subscriptions from local employers to finance high-quality shared services including retraining.

Lack of support for part-time study

The Employment Department (1992a) asserts that further and higher education make a significant contribution to lifetime learning, with nearly 1.5 million people over 25 enrolled in courses, many studying for vocational awards. In 1990, more than half of all students entering higher education were mature students studying part-time. One of the anomalies in financial support for education and training, however, is the lack of support for those undertaking part-time study. This particularly affects people in part-time work, many of whom are already deprived of employer-provided training and are therefore doubly disadvantaged in terms of support for training. Increased participation of part-time workers in education and training may depend, therefore, not only on action by employers but also on central financial support that is more equitably directed to both full- and part-time study (NIACE, 1993).

The Lifetime Targets would also stand a greater chance of being met if more resources were committed to education and training guidance services.

Action by Providers

Education and training providers can themselves assist in the achievement of the Lifetime Targets by improving conditions for adult access; by providing more flexible part-time education and training provision, accessible guidance services and learner support mechanisms, and by implementing equal opportunities measures. The difficulties many people experience in participating in education need greater recognition in course timing and delivery. The Leeds survey of training for teachers (Leeds City Council, 1992), for example, echoed many others in showing that women are particularly concerned about venues, transport and personal safety. Several reports have detailed ways in which formal education and training providers can cater better for the needs of adult learners (e.g. McGivney (ed.) 1992; NIACE, 1993).

Collaboration with other bodies

Analyses suggest that wider recognition of the skills and competences acquired through company training and accreditation schemes will require collaboration and flexibility from education and training providers and a progressive diminution of the academic-vocational divide:

> *Any university now running a CATS (Credit Accumulation and Transfer) scheme should be poised to receive employees who arrive with the results of the credit ratings of some of the company in-house courses which they have been required to attend for the company's own training purposes. This is like admission with advanced standing. It is learning acquired through an employer but which carries with it properly validated, academically assessed credit rating against the requirements for either a Bachelor's or Master's degree or some professional certification through the Management Charter Initiative or a diploma in social work* (Evans, 1993: 108).

An effective training scheme for health service workers in Nottingham demonstrated that, despite differences in the Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CATS) and NVQ systems, training programmes can successfully combine the two when there is successful collaboration between workplaces and education institutions:

> *It is clear that future work would be assisted by the development of greater harmony between the two systems ... This work has demonstrated that it is possible to meet the quality assurance requirements of both a university and NCVQ in a single programme and that the differences between the two lie largely in the manner of assessment and in its verification in the workplace* (Otter, 1993: 74).

In short, the literature indicates that increased participation in training by part-time and other 'atypical' employees will require substantial action from employers, government and education and training providers working in tandem. There also need to be significant changes of attitude among both employers and workers, and incentives to both parties to move towards the common goal that the National Targets provide. Unless both are equally persuaded of the value of training and qualifications, the targets will prove unrealistic and unattainable.

Chapter 6

Some Examples of Good Practice

There have been some excellent training initiatives for part-time and temporary workers and labour market returners which have led to gains for both individual workers and employers. Some of these are outlined below.

Initiatives for Part-time and Temporary Workers

Sheffield City Council has been running a special course – 'Take Fifteen' – for women part-time workers which involves 15 mornings' attendance without loss of pay. Courses are informal and give part-time employees the chance to meet with workers from other departments, share experience, learn how the Council works and how their job fits in. They also aim to help participants identify and assess their own abilities and to build confidence ('Take Ten' literature, Sheffield City Council).

A manual worker programme was introduced by Ealing Borough Council in 1990 as part of the harmonisation of manual and non- manual workers' conditions and in order to offer manual workers career development opportunities. The courses offer training in non-manual skills (e.g. word-processing, office skills, computing), supervisory skills and personal development training. They are run as far as possible during employees' normal working hours, so accommodating part-time workers, and at a variety of local venues wherever possible (Clarke, 1991).

A scheme enabling temporary workers to build up training credits during their work assignments has been developed by Tyneside TEC and Astra Training Services. Astra's recruitment service offers temporary workers one week's training at any of its training centres for every 10 weeks worked over any period and on any number of assignments. The scheme is aimed at workers at operative, skilled and supervisory levels who are not being trained by their employers and who do not qualify for government-funded training schemes (*Training Digest*, December 1992).

TARGED (NW Wales TEC) has supported a Health Authority programme to raise the skills of lower-skilled groups and give them the opportunity to seek promotion. Care has been taken to ensure that the training is modular, flexible, available on a part-time basis and can lead to NVQs (Equal Opportunities Commission, 1993).

Initiatives for Manual Workers and Low-skilled Groups

Workbase Training, a voluntary organisation with charitable status, has been working since 1978 in both the public and private sectors. It specialises in communications skills training for manual and unskilled workers, having found that improved communication skills can lead to improved morale and higher performance and prepare workers for upgrading.

The organisation adopts a three-stage approach. It first conducts a training needs analysis of departments or sections of staff. Group meetings and face-to-face interviews are then conducted with employees to help overcome resistance to training. This is followed by design of customised and flexible training plans.

Workbase Training has benefited gardeners reluctant to take training in pesticides because of worries about failing the test; catering staff unused to using a till or writing labels for sandwiches; and care assistants having difficulty completing record books. In one London borough, the organisation developed a City and Guilds accredited training programme for Home Helps. This took place in work time, two days a week over a five-week period and covered basic literacy, numeracy, communications skills and other identified interests. In another London borough, basic skills training was provided for women cleaners who were reluctant to take on caretaker posts because of the paperwork and oral skills required. The borough now offers its own training programme which addresses skill shortages and provides opportunities for career development for non-white collar employees.

Workbase has worked in residential homes for the elderly, with care assistants (upgraded eventually to residential social workers), cleaners, cooks and assistants. These required mainly communication skills training and, sometimes, more advanced training. Individual targets were agreed for employees, and courses organised around such themes as team-building and coping with change, independence at work, improved standards of care, changing working conditions. In one home, 56 members of staff were awarded a City and Guilds award in communication skills.

Workbase has also worked with ancillary staff at a number of hospitals. In one it organised a 12-day course spread out across 12 weeks, covering areas such as communication skills, writing and coping with difficult situations.

Workbase Training has shown that work-related courses can be adapted for low-skilled workers; that low-skilled workers can be upgraded and made more flexible, and that training can lessen divisions among staff and lead to a new team spirit (Workbase Training (undated); Kelcher, 1990).

Initiatives for Women Employees and Labour Market Returners

In 1990 Oxfordshire County Council and Ruskin College jointly mounted a course for clerical and secretarial workers, lasting for five full days. The majority of participants were women labour market returners in their 40s who were still coping with a 'double shift' combining paid employment with family responsibilities. Some were without qualifications and others had CSEs, O-Levels and secretarial qualifications. The course included work on understanding the workings of the Council, workplace issues, study and communication skills, job application and interview skills, numeracy and computing, personal development, project work, individual counselling and guidance. It involved participative learning in small and full group sessions, presentations, discussions, videos and individual project work. One of the benefits of participation was that women without formal qualifications gained confidence and no longer felt that this was a deterrent to pursuing further training or career options. Several felt more able seek promotion and change direction (when childcare made this possible): 'Participants had a taste of learning new skills and participating in adult education which has encouraged many of them to think in terms of more education and training in the future'(Hughes and Mayo, 1992).

Midland Bank plc, one of the founder members of Opportunity 2000, has had an equal opportunities policy since the late 1970s. In 1992, women constituted 63 per cent of the total workforce and 94 per cent of all part-time employees. Benefits include extended maternity leave, career break and retainer schemes (for childcare, elder care, care of the long-term sick or other domestic reasons); annual work placements for those on extended leave; priority returners scheme, open to all staff with two years' satisfactory service; family leave (up to five paid days' leave per annum for men or women who need time off to care for sick or elderly dependants or children under 14); and up to six months' unpaid adoption leave. The bank funds and co-funds nurseries and holiday playschemes.

Training schemes include 'Springboard' – a training programme offering personal development for women in non-management grades; the 'Leap

Forward Programme' – an open learning, self-development package for women employees and returners; programmes for ethnic minority workers and people with disabilities; and a range of equal opportunities awareness training material and programmes for personnel and line managers who are provided with an equal opportunities checklist for action on career development (Midland Bank, undated).

Barclays Bank plc have a scheme enabling male and female staff in managerial, clerical, secretarial or specialist occupations to take a career break for up to two years. On completing the break, returners have extensive career counselling which identifies any training needs arising from skills obsolescence because of changes in technology, the market environment, product mix and working methods during the career break. Retraining is directed at both improving effectiveness in the first post-break job as well as a developmental preparation for subsequent posts (Rajan and Van Eupen, 1990).

Lancaster City Council has schemes which enable people to maintain links with their former jobs by means of 10 days' work experience and two-and-a-half days' refresher training per year. After a minimum of two years, former employees can move on to the linked re-entry scheme which offers a 12-month reintroduction into permanent employment. This consists of a six-week re-induction course prior to returning, continuing on- and off-the-job training and individual reviews.

At re-entry level, training includes assertiveness, personal effectiveness, time management and dealing with stress. Managers are trained to be aware of the pressures women can be under, especially when they first return to work. The Council also offers a workplace nursery with 50 places and a sliding scale of charges, flexible working hours, a childcare allowance for new employees, women's training, women's groups in each department and an overall women's forum (Rajan and Van Eupen, 1990).

Birmingham TEC launched a 2,000-place Return to Work initiative in 1992. Courses are open to anyone who wants to get back into employment after a long absence. They are run by colleges and training providers and cover a wide range of occupations and skills. They are designed to update skills, teach new ones, improve interview techniques and provide qualifications to help people re-enter the labour force. All the courses are free and many offer flexible timing to suit those with family commitments (*Employment News*, 10/92).

An Opportunities for Women Centre has been established in Oldham with funding from the European Social Fund and Oldham TEC. The centre offers information and training and puts women in contact with

local employers, training and education providers, childcare agencies and agencies providing vocational support and guidance. It is open to all women and children are welcomed. It offers a 10-week Women into Work training programme for women aged 25-plus who have been out of full-time employment for at least a year, with financial assistance towards travel and childcare costs. Participants are encouraged to present a portfolio of evidence towards achieving the RSA Enterprise Skills Profile. There is also a programme aimed at ethnic minority women: a training package incorporating confidence-building, back to work skills, information on opportunities and English for Speakers of Other Languages. (The pilot course revealed a need for two levels of training: one for people with basic English and one for those with advanced English.) In 1992, the project acquired a double-decker bus which now provides drop-in facilities and training to different ethnic minority communities on a daily basis.

The centre also provides computer packages and resources and guidance on: childcare, career development, personal development, training opportunities, self employment, education and qualifications and sources of funding for qualification. Users, of whom there were 400 in the first year, receive in-depth guidance and profiling and follow-up contact after completing a training programme or receiving guidance at three- and six-month intervals. Employers are sent resource and information packs and questionnaires to evaluate their use (Oldham TEC, 1993).

Lancashire Area West TEC has four Opportunities for Women centres. The TEC has conducted a childcare survey to map provision and this information is available on a database at the centres. Among the courses offered are a women-only driving instructor course and specific courses and initiatives aimed at Afro-Caribbean and Asian women (Women Returners Network, September 1992).

Plymouth Women Returners Centre was funded until recently by the Urban Programme. It is located near the city centre and is open week days from 9.30am until 3.00pm. It offers a range of courses with help towards childcare costs and one-to-one information and counselling. There is a resource room for job seeking. Between December 1990 and December 1992, over 1,000 women had been helped, a high proportion of whom progressed to employment or other training.

Under the aegis of the Employment Service, the National Council for One Parent Families has been running a series of six-day Return to Work courses around the country (23 during each year of operation). These are free to lone parents seeking to return to the labour market. Creche facilities and lunches are included and there is help with travel expenses.

Areas covered in the courses are confidence-building, putting together a CV, interview practice and the financial implications of returning to work. The courses also provide advice on local employment opportunities, further training and job search facilities. Participants are monitored for outcomes and progression and any barriers they may face when attempting to return to training or work. The programme has 'outperformed' in terms of moving women into education and training and has had a range of very positive outcomes for participants (National Council for One Parent Families, 1992).

In Hertfordshire TEC, 900 women returners were trained in 1992–93, with a positive progression rate of 75 per cent. All TEC training aimed at this group is part-time and flexible, and Back to Work provision has assessment of prior learning as a built-in feature. Higher levels skills training for women includes: Professional Updating for Women, Back to Science for returners (equivalent to NVQ level 4/5) and Business Administration training for returners (NVQ level 3).

Other TEC initiatives for labour market returners include a jobshare directory, training bursaries for lone parents and joint funding for a childcare co-ordinator with the county council. The TEC has also conducted a seminar on flexible working for employers and is promoting good practice to highlight to employers that implementation of equal opportunities can make good business sense (Hertfordshire Training and Enterprise Council, 1992).

North Derbyshire TEC has introduced a training scheme – Skillsbuild – for the long-term unemployed and labour market returners. It includes customised training, a programme designed to provide trainees with the skills needed to fill specific vacancies with employers guaranteeing a full-time job on completion. Incentives are built in for both trainees and employers. Once training is completed and participants have been employed continuously for more than 90 days, they receive a £200 cash bonus. Participating employers also receive £200 when an employee recruited via the customised programme has completed three months of continuous work (Women Returners Network, September 1992).

Southern Derbyshire TEC offers a recruitment and training subsidy to employers who take on for training the long-term unemployed including women returners who may not be registered unemployed.

Assessment of Prior Learning and Accrediting Unpaid Work

The Civil Service uses biodata sifting in recruitment for its Direct Entry Grade 7 scheme which enables people to enter the service without working their way up over many years. It considers not only applicants'

qualifications and employment record but also other aspects of their lives, thus taking account of the skills and experience people have acquired during periods at home or in the voluntary sector. There are no special obstacles to promotion for part-time employees (Women's National Commission, 1991). McGwire's (1993) book on the best companies for women names the Civil Service as the best employer (although some departments are better than others). The Department of the Environment, for example, 'has an Under Secretary who works part-time, demonstrating that senior work can be done part-time'.

At Oaklands College, Hertfordshire, pilot TEC-funded programmes on accrediting current competence in unpaid work have been mounted for participants in a TEC Back to Work programme who wanted to study business administration. The programme is offered within term time and school hours and involves 12 hours per week at college and three hours a week in tutor-led individual portfolio work and support programmes. Participants are given a great deal of support and guidance. Sixteen women in the first pilot courses acquired NVQ level 3.

Work is now progressing on embedding assessment of prior learning in the wider curriculum at the college (presentation to Accreditation of Unpaid Work Conference, London, February 1993).

A course funded by Barnsley and Doncaster TEC and run by Barnsley Chamber of Commerce Training Ltd enabled women to have their unpaid work evaluated towards NVQ level 2 in business and administration. The 20-week programme involved assessment of skills and portfolio-building, an employers' day and job search advice. Fifteen out of 20 women were accredited to NVQ level 2 for London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Business and Administration (Barnsley and Doncaster TEC, 1992).

Employee Development Schemes

A survey of companies which have introduced Employee Development Schemes found that the schemes aimed at less qualified workers had received a very high response from their target groups. For example, Ford found that 70 per cent of participants in the EDAP scheme had not previously been involved in further education and Lucas found that the highest response was from its target group – the hourly paid. Most of the case studies reported that men and women seemed to participate equally, although some companies were aware of the difficulties married women faced in taking part because of problems with timing and childcare. Some companies had introduced additional measures to attract women, such as running courses at lunchtime (Metcalf, 1993).

Introduction of National Vocational Qualifications

Mansfield Knitwear Ladieswear, which is largely based in the East Midlands, is part of the Coats Viyella Group and a major supplier to Marks and Spencer. The company employs about 2,300 workers, two-thirds of them women. In the early 1990s, faced with the demand for shorter lead-times, the need to maintain quality and possible competition from overseas, the company needed to ensure that resources were used efficiently and multiskilling was seen as essential. The arrival of relevant NVQs for the knitwear industry (NVQ level 2 in Product Assembly Sewing) provided the opportunity to develop systematic training. The Personnel Executive was made aware of the qualification by a presentation, organised by a local TEC, given by the locally-based Knitting and Lace Industries Training Resources Agency. He subsequently persuaded the company to introduce the NVQ, and they received pump-priming from TEC discretionary f[illegible]s towards the costs of its implementation (e.g. the expenses of regist[illegible]g as a centre, training assessors and candidate registration fees).

The NVQ initiative was focused largely at the Worksop factory, which has 520 employees, mostly female machinists working on a piece-rate basis. Some of these had no qualifications and others some GCSEs and vocational qualifications in fields not relevant to sewing or related skills. Two hundred women Grade A workers at the factory had only been trained in one type of machine but the demands being made on the company required them to gain other skills. As the women were working on a piece-rate basis, anything that interfered with output, such as training on another machine, was resisted. The introduction of the NVQ therefore needed to be handled sensitively.

A presentation about the NVQ was made at a meeting of the Joint Works Committee, highlighting the potential benefits to individuals and the company. At this stage, some reservations were expressed by people who believed that worthwhile qualifications could only be gained through attending college. Subsequently a promotional video provided by the TEC was shown every day for a week at lunchtime in the staff canteen and handouts were distributed. Initially opportunities to participate were limited to 40 Grade A workers. Twenty-five applications were eventually received. As the scheme became established, the number of participants grew to 40 and pressure from others to take part increased: 'Interest is now so strong that as soon as people leave the scheme (because they have completed or are leaving the company) there is immediate competition from others to take their place'. Nevertheless, the scheme and its benefits are still continually promoted.

A team of 12 assessors was selected from a cross-section of training, supervisory and operative staff and all supervisors are now abreast of developments. They latter were not originally involved in the introduction of the scheme and it is now realised that they should be been kept informed from the start.

By December 1992, the initiative had demonstrated 'real and significant' benefits for the company, notably: a marked reduction (by 50 per cent) in the number of rejects; a more flexible workforce which can be deployed more effectively; improved use of equipment and resources; less down-time; better delivery to customers; lower staff turnover; greater worker motivation and commitment to the company. The benefits to workers have been identified as: greater self-esteem and work satisfaction; achievement of higher piece-rate productivity (because they perform to higher standards) and therefore higher earnings. There have also been fewer stand-downs and lay-offs because workers can be deployed on other tasks.

The company is now fully committed to NVQs and intends to extend the opportunity for Grade A workers to achieve relevant qualifications. They also intend to adopt NVQs for other members of staff as and when they become available (Fennell, 1993).

Boots the Chemist has also assessed the value of introducing NVQs:

> *The company identified the aims of the training programme and translated these into measurable outputs, related to recruitment, retention, standards of performance and standards of service to customers.* NVQs *were then introduced into a sample of branches and performance monitored. On all measures the* NVQ *stores performed better than others* (Metcalf, 1993).

In the Newcastle branch of Boots, the policy is for part-time workers to share the benefits offered to full-time employees. With the exception of Saturday staff, all employees are encouraged to study and train for a qualification in retailing up to NVQ level 1. They can then train to NVQ level 2 or above, which usually leads to a more responsible job in the store. Boots recognise that training for part-timers will take longer than their full-time counterparts so a flexible approach is taken, including home study packages and training videos. Part-timers are encouraged to play an active role in the store's problem-solving Quality Teams. The Boots package is seen as 'a recipe for greater retention, commitment and personal development. For the employee it means getting full-time value out of a part-time job' (National Council for One Parent Families, 1992).

At Butlin's SouthCoast World, which is part of the Rank Organisation, seasonal staff in all areas of work – office work, security, restaurants, bars, shops, etc. – are offered training leading to NVQs. All qualifications are gained by on-the-job assessment, and trainees who successfully complete to NVQ level 2 are offered employment contracts (Butlin's Holiday Worlds 1993 leaflet).

A TEC-supported ASDA training project in Merseyside seeks to expand the availability of NVQs to existing staff, who are predominantly women part-time workers with few if any previous qualifications. The project is a transnational one which combines training ASDA employees and some of ASDA's European suppliers. It is partly funded by the EC FORCE programme (Women Returners Network, December 1992).

'Practice Success' is a programme of training and development in Nottingham designed to meet the needs of both employers and individual employees in the health service. The programme was set up in response to the 1990 reforms of the National Health Service, which highlighted the need for a coherent and targeted approach to training in the service. A training needs analysis was conducted and led to a series of one- and two-day training sessions provided by the Family Health Service Authority. In addition, specific courses for day- and half-day-release were developed with local colleges and the then Nottingham Polytechnic. The programme includes an advanced diploma for practice management, with CATS (Credit Accumulation and Transfer) accreditation, and a foundation certificate for practice receptionists with CATS accreditation and NVQ units in clerical and administrative work. There are now 50 free-standing modules covering all aspects of work in general and dental practice. They provide for flexible local delivery, learning in the workplace, and for accreditation which can meet the needs of every individual. Many of the first participants were unqualified, with little experience of post-school education or training (Otter, 1993).

Initiatives for Small Firms

In one area of south London, Workbase Training has set up general skills and customised training courses for small businesses which, because of lack of resources and work pressures, cannot provide training to all their employees. With funding from several local agencies, the organisation has developed a flexible learning centre enabling users to choose their method and time of learning. At the centre, workers can receive advice and tuition, work on their own, or take part in courses and work towards qualifications. Local employers are also offered a free consultancy service which may include an analysis of employees' communication

skills needs and customised courses around specific work requirements. Within four months of opening, nine local firms had used the centre.

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PART 2

The Case Studies

The aims of the qualitative study were to identify through fieldwork:

- the nature and duration of the training available to part-time and temporary workers
- sources of financial support for that training
- the practices and attitudes of employers in relation to providing education or training for their temporary and part-time workers
- the attitudes and experiences of temporary and part-time workers in relation to education and training and the barriers they experience in accessing opportunities
- differences in practice relating to variables such as age, length of service, ethnic origin, type of enterprise, etc.
- successful strategies which help promote effective participation in education and training by part-time and temporary workers.

The fieldwork was conducted between April and July 1993 by Dr Veronica McGivney of NIACE and Dr Maggie Coats of the Open University Vocational Qualification Centre. It involved contacts with employers in different sectors and visits to those who agreed to participate. During visits, open and semi-structured interviews were conducted with personnel and training managers and part-time and temporary employees. The question schedules used can be found in the Appendix.

Selection of Participating Organisations

Although care was taken to contact different sized enterprises in different sectors the eventual sample of organisations was inevitably determined by those which agreed to participate. Inevitably, employers with a good training record and with a policy to train all employees were more likely to respond than others. Thus although a good spread of sectors was achieved (banking, retail, cleaning, food manufacturing, local government, education, civil service, catering and the leisure industry), it proved impossible in the time available to get a good spread of different-sized organisations. Although many were contacted, few smaller firms agreed to participate in the survey. Moreover, the time-lag between first contacts and visits was inevitably lengthy. Requests to participate had to be transmitted to other managers and the feasibility and implications of arranging interviews with part-time and temporary staff during work

time fully considered. Some organisations which expressed interest in participating were eventually obliged to decline; others decided that they did not have enough part-time or temporary employees to be relevant to the enquiry. However, it was judged unwise, while awaiting employer decisions, to contact too many other firms in case it proved impossible to follow up all those who agreed to participate in the brief time allocated for the whole study. Hence the organisations visited are not necessarily representative of all employers (as the literature search suggests) and the case studies may give a rosier picture of employer training practices than the actuality warrants.

The Visits

Some of the visits reflected the difficulties experienced by organisations in involving part-time workers in training. Sometimes only training or personnel officers were available for interview as part-time and temporary staff were working tight shifts and could not be released. A visit to one organisation, involving an eight-hour round-trip, produced limited information as none of the seasonal workers could attend pre-arranged interviews due to sudden production pressures. Sometimes staff could be interviewed only during training or on the job, which meant that conversation was possible for only limited periods. Several visits did not generate enough information to warrant a case study report.

In many cases, however, part-time and temporary staff were specially released to assist the enquiry. Managers who facilitated visits in participating organisations went to an immense amount of trouble to provide information and arrange interviews. We are extremely grateful to them and to all interviewees for their time, patience and kind co-operation in this enquiry.

Case Study 1

Midland Bank plc

Visits were made to: Watling Court, London; Finsbury Pavement Branch London; Poultry Branch, London; Coventry District Service Centre.

Dates of visits: 19 May 1993; 20 May 1993; 26 May 1993

Interviews with: 12 keytime staff

(Additional general information was provided by Stephanie Heath, Human Resources Adviser, Employee Development.)

In March 1993 Midland Bank had 45,200 employees, of whom 8018 were 'keytime' (part-time) staff: 17.7 per cent of the total workforce. Keytime contracts vary from two hours to four days a week according to individual and business needs. Most keytime staff are based in retail outlets (branch banking) and the District Service Centres (processing centres). 34.2 per cent of clerical staff are keytime and 1.2 per cent of managerial staff. Six hundred and five posts are job-shares. In some departments, staff are hired on a temporary basis to deal with peak flows of work.

Midland Bank was one of the founder members of Opportunity 2000 and in 1992 was joint winner of the Working Mothers' Association 'Employer of the Year' award for its policies benefiting working parents (career break schemes, equal opportunities policies and initiatives on childcare).

In late 1992, nearly 70 per cent of the bank workforce were female. Twenty-one per cent were in management (compared with 7.5 per cent in 1982) but there were three times as many women as men in clerical grades. The return rate from maternity leave is high – 78 per cent for staff and 81 per cent for managers. Thirty-nine per cent of returning staff and 13 per cent of returning managers transfer to keytime work on their return. Career break schemes are available to full-time and keytime employees who have completed two years' satisfactory service. The schemes provide a high level of contact with the bank and opportunities to return to work with the bank wherever possible. There are two types of career break schemes – a Retainer Scheme available to all management grades and staff participating in advanced development programmes, and

a Priority Returners Scheme available to all staff grades. The bank encourages employees taking breaks to maintain contact with the workplace through measures such as annual updating programmes, career discussions and short periods of work experience.

Equal opportunities handbooks are available to all Midland managers and staff. There are 115 nurseries around the country providing approximately 900 places and 60 holiday playschemes

Training

A training and education guide is distributed to every department, section and branch within Midland. The purpose of training is to help individuals gain specific knowledge and to refresh, update or assist their progression.

Midland training programmes are produced in modular form to fit in with both participant and business requirements. They are available as videos, technology-based training, books and distance learning packages. Training is delivered in courses, workshops and seminars but there is also an increasing amount of independent learning. Most training programmes are for both full-time and keytime employees. Although there are some programmes specifically for keytime staff, demand is quite low. This is attributed to the fact that the training needs of full-time and keytime staff are largely similar and it is seen as an advantage to have a mix of staff in group training sessions.

Some training is compulsory (e.g. induction training for new employees and a three-module induction programme for keytime staff) and some is optional. Compulsory general training covers areas such as voucher appreciation, data preparation, fraud detection, cashiering and customer service.

The duration of training depends on the subject matter and can be anything from a one-hour session to a two-week course. In general, one-day programmes are more popular, together with distance learning packages, especially in areas with a high keytime working population such as branch banking.

Employees are briefed by line managers before and after each training package. During these meetings, an individual's expectations and objectives are discussed. In most instances this is followed through with an action plan to put learning into practical use. Individual training requirements can also be discussed with line managers during annual appraisals or at other suitable times.

Most training is delivered locally and, in some departments, on-site. This allows training to be customised and accommodates specific working hours. The 'First Direct' 24-hour telephone customer service centre conducts both day and evening training sessions.

Accreditation attached to training is currently being piloted in some parts of the organisation, e.g. branch banking cashiering.

In addition to its general training, Midland has a 'Leap' distance learning library with over 600 self-education products – books, videos and audio materials – which cover development skills and a range of business information. The Leap catalogue is distributed to all bank departments, branches and sections. A 'Leap Forward' self-development training package has been developed specifically for women employees and those returning to work after a career break. Midland has also developed training courses for women managers and a 'Springboard' development programme for women in non-managerial grades.

The main constraints on training are budgetary and difficulties in releasing staff for training because of resourcing problems.

Keytimer Attitudes

A staff attitude survey conducted in 1992 revealed that keytimers tend to have a very positive attitude to their work and to experience greater job satisfaction than full-time employees. Keytimers rated the bank more highly than full-time workers on training adequacy and valuing the individual, while full-timers rated the bank more highly on commitment to development. However, the survey also indicated that keytimers are less likely than full-timers to have interim appraisals and to have future training needs discussed during their annual performance review.

Another finding was that full-time staff tended to consider career advancement a more important issue than keytime staff, a large number of whom were content to stay in the same job for the foreseeable future. Whereas 42 per cent of responding full-time staff wished to move into management positions, only 6 per cent of keytime staff had such an ambition

Interviews with Staff

Watling Court, London; Finsbury Pavement Branch London; Poultry Branch, London

A., a woman in her 20s with a child of 16 months, works three days a week as a personnel assistant. Before taking maternity leave she worked full-time for the bank but there was no possibility of returning to the same post. A. has school qualifications and a number of secretarial qualifications taken at her own expense at evening classes. At Midland she received induction and cashier training for her full-time post and has not felt the need for more training since returning to the bank after maternity leave, although she attended a word-processing course when this was suggested to her. The course took place in working time and she was the only keytime participant. Although A. does not feel she needs more training for her current job she might consider doing another computer course. She feels that it might be difficult to receive more in-house training as someone would have to take time off to train her.

A. believes there are fewer opportunities for keytimers than for full-timers at the bank and has found that the nurseries give priority to full-timers who are 'more needed than keytimers.'

B. is a branch clerk in her 30s. She is married but has no children. She has some O-Levels. B. worked full-time for Midland for 20 years before transferring to keytime. She now works alternate weeks in a job-share. Since moving to keytime, B. has participated in some off-site training courses and feels she needs more training in the computer system on customer information. As her job-share partner was working the week when the training was offered, she missed the course and has to catch up on her own, although her time will be paid. B. has followed the 'Leap Forward' personal development programme, which she considers excellent. She regrets that she has no qualifications to show for her 20 years at the bank but feels the bank would not sponsor her to take an accredited training course at this stage. She wishes she had taken a banking qualification earlier but was deterred by the fact that sponsorship and study leave tended to be given to employees with higher qualifications. She believes that there are age restrictions on Midland management and advanced development training programmes and that they exclude women returners aged over 30. B. had not heard of NVQs.

B. considers that job and progression possibilities at the bank are more limited now that she is a keytime worker: 'They don't give you responsibility. I feel that they package you into the "little housewife with kids"

bracket and assume you don't want to progress. You won't get any career development if you're part-time, that's for sure!'.

C. is a branch clerk in her 20s with some O-Levels and CSEs. She worked full-time at the bank for 11 years before taking maternity leave. She now works alternate weeks in a job-share. C. prefers working part-time although she feels there are some disadvantages. Like A. and B. she believes her prospects are now more limited: 'They don't push women with kids. Part-timers aren't top of the list. I used to get training suggestions before maternity leave. Now it doesn't happen.' Nevertheless she is happy with her current level of responsibility as she likes to 'go home at five without hassles'. C. admits that her perceptions have changed since starting a family: 'Before, I wanted to do all the schemes but when you come back it's not a career. It's just a job'.

C. participated in various training courses when she worked full-time but none were accredited towards a qualification. Since returning as a keytime worker, she has been on a computer training course and has received some in-house, one-to-one training. She considers current in-branch training to be far superior to the training offered when she was first at the bank. Nevertheless C. regrets her lack of qualifications and wishes she had a banking qualification. She believes that if she wanted a qualification now she would have to take it in her own time and at her own expense as the bank tends to restrict release to employees with A-Levels or equivalent. She had not heard of NVQs.

D. is a woman in her 30s with some O- and A-Levels. She has also participated in a number of adult education courses – typing, keep fit and flower arranging. She worked full-time at the bank for 14 years before taking eight months' maternity leave. She now works alternate weeks as a branch clerk in a job-share and is happy with the hours she works, feeling that she has the best of both worlds. D. is not interested in working full-time or taking on more responsibility. Since becoming keytime she has taken refresher courses in 'basic' areas such as letter writing, personal safety and fraud. She is satisfied with the training she has received and does not feel she needs any more for the work she is doing. She has little knowledge of Midland equal opportunity policies or self-development training schemes.

E. is a woman in her 20s with some O-Levels and CSEs and RSA typing diplomas. She previously worked full-time and is now working alternate weeks as a branch clerk. She is satisfied with the hours she works. E. has been trained in the new computer system and in business accounts but she feels she is not adequately trained and has to pick new things up on the job. Whenever she has asked for more training, however, nothing has

happened or she has been given 'something to read' rather than any practical help. She claims other colleagues seeking training have received a similar response. She attributes this to a heavy workload which prevents those who could train staff from gaining release to do it.

E. has no desire to gain any more qualifications as she is already on the highest clerical grade and cannot progress any further. She believes there is a certain 'stigma' attached to keytime workers and that they cannot move into management.

F. is an accounts manager with two children. She has O- and A-Levels and a banking qualification. She worked full-time before taking a career break of two-and-a-half years. During the break she worked for 10 days in a local Midland branch and did a Saturday rota as a way of keeping in contact. She also had three updating sessions. There were no full-time management positions available on her return so she took a three-month temporary post before moving into a job-share, initiated by herself and a colleague, which involves working alternate weeks. This was the first management job-share in Midland retail banking.

F. anticipated that on her return to the bank she would be offered a lot of courses but although her training needs were centrally assessed, she found that she had to initiate most of her subsequent training herself. She has noticed a significant change in Midland training, particularly in terms of its delivery: a lot of courses are now self-learning packages to be undertaken within working hours. F. also feels there is less distinction between full- and keytime staff than hitherto and that the bank offers good opportunities to women returners 'in theory at least: I'm not so sure how it works in practice'. She considers Midland a very flexible employer and enjoys her current working hours but she suspects she will have to return to full-time hours if she wants career advancement.

Interviews with Staff

Coventry District Service Centre

There are more keytime than full-time employees at the centre and most are female. Four of the interviewees were encoders. Encoders receive an aptitude test, induction and hands-on training and annual appraisals, which are now a joint process involving both manager appraisal and self-appraisal.

G. is an encoding clerk in her 30s with some CSEs. She has worked part-time for four years, after previously working full-time at one of the bank branches. She now works 25 hours a week. When full-time she received a four-week training course and on-the-job training. Since

becoming keytime she has received induction and on-the-job training and is not currently interested in any more training. She has little knowledge of Midland equal opportunity policies and feels that part-timers are not given as much information on these as full-timers.

H. is an encoder in her 30s with some school qualifications, an RSA in computer studies and considerable computing experience gained from working in a number of jobs before joining Midland. She has worked part-time at the Centre for four years and currently works 25 hours a week, transferring to evenings during the school holidays. Her training has been limited to hands-on training and although she would like more, she claims there is nothing else to be trained for as this is the only work that be can done as a keytimer: 'Encoding is a specified keytime job and there is no possibility of moving as there is only one grade to move up and then only if you work evenings'.

H. feels that a sharp distinction is made between full-timers and keyworkers, with the former getting more varied jobs, more responsibility and greater progression opportunities. She is frustrated that her computing experience has not been accredited and that as a keytimer, she does not have a chance to work on other computer systems at Midland. She is currently participating in a 20-week evening class in German at her own expense.

I. is a woman in her 30s who has been working as an encoder for two-and-a-half years. She works weekdays from 9am to 3pm. She has found the training for the job good but is frustrated by the lack of further training: 'They won't let you have time off work and they won't train if there are no jobs. There are too many of us here. If they let one of us train for something they'd have to do it for all of us'. I. is also frustrated at the lack of progression opportunities ('The best jobs go to full-timers') and feels that keytimers are less well regarded than full-time staff, irrespective of their experience and qualifications. Although she likes the work and the hours, I. is conscious that she is working well beneath her capacities. She has taken a course in accounting at a local college at her own expense but to date it has not improved her job prospects.

J., who is in her 20s, has some O-Levels and CSEs and a typing diploma. She used to work full-time in a Midland branch before joining the Centre, where she has worked for the past two-and-a-half years, first as an encoder and now as a Returns Clerk. J received two days' training for her current job although she expected more. All her training has been on-the-job and she was unable to take the banking examination as she did not have enough school qualifications. Like her colleagues, J. feels

that keytimers are regarded as of less importance than full-timers and is frustrated at the lack of opportunities:

> *When I came here I thought they'd pick up my experience but they didn't. There are very few opportunities in this environment. There's no point in getting other qualifications because there are no opportunities. If you wanted to do something different you'd really have to push but you wouldn't get any encouragement.*

J. complained that very little information on benefits and rights are given to keytimers when they arrive.

K., a woman in her 30s, has taken accredited typing, book-keeping and social care courses in her own time and has participated in a government computer training course. She works as a Returns Clerk 30 hours a week. She considers the training given has been good but limited. She would like more training, especially off-the-job training, but there are no opportunities for keytimers as there are few prospects of job advancement. She is interested in the Leap self-development programme which was mentioned during her appraisal but does not know how to access the programme.

L. is in her 20s and has some O-Levels and CSEs. She has taken word-processing and shorthand courses in her own time and at her own expense. She previously worked as a dental nurse and now works just under 30 hours a week as an encoder. L. is happy with her current hours and the flexibility of the job. She considers the training received has been good but limited. She would like to work full-time but there are no opportunities.

Like several of her colleagues, L. was unaware of Midland equal opportunity policies or self-development training schemes.

Case Study 2

Oxfordshire County Council

Date of visit: 5 May 1993

Interviews with: Principal Personnel Officer, Personnel Officer and six part-time employees

Oxfordshire County Council has been following a programme of organisational restructuring over the last five years. It has 17,000 employees, 12,000 of them in the education sector. Eighty per cent of the workforce are women (the Council employs one in eight of all working women in the county) and over 66 per cent work part-time. Part-time women outnumber full-time men by two to one. Over 10 per cent of women in the two most senior management grades also work less than full-time. A variety of hours are worked. There is no discrimination between part- and full-time staff.

The Council is one of the signatories to Opportunity 2000 and has been named one of the 50 best companies for women in a book of that name. It operates a number of equal opportunities strategies to help working parents and carers, such as career break schemes, compassionate leave when children or other dependants are ill, nursery and playscheme provision, flexi-time working and flexi-place working (employees can work some core hours in the office and some at home). Flexible working has become a strong feature of employment practice at the Council:

> *As you move into more flexible working patterns, family responsibilities which were hidden start to emerge. The Council is beginning to recognise the wider responsibilities people have which are hidden when people are at work. Men are also beginning to ask to work part-time.*

The Council has recently restructured and there are now fewer management tiers.

The Council sees training as essential to the success of the QUEST initiative. QUEST represents the Council's core values: Quality, Effectiveness and Service to all.

There are five areas where training is offered: induction training, skills/qualification training, ongoing and development training, management training. The Council is working towards providing at least five

days' formal training per individual each year. Training days, some optional and some compulsory, are frequently available, although these tend to be targeted at people at certain levels. The Council offers short and longer management courses leading to a certificate or diploma in Management Studies. There are also nine-day programmes on 'Managing Yourself and Other People', one of which is specifically organised for part-time employees. These include an accreditation of prior experience and learning process and provide evidence of competences for a certificate at management level.

There is one general development programme below manager level – the 'Step Forward' programme for clerical and secretarial staff. This is a 10-day programme which involves one- or two-day sessions over a two- to three-month period.

Staff have annual development and performance reviews as part of the QUEST programme, which encourages them to identify major tasks for the coming year, agree action with their manager and identify training that might enhance their performance. Employees can ask to attend specific training.

Interviews with Employees

A. is a development officer at the farm museum. She has an MA degree. Before taking a five-year career break she worked in museums in London and returned to work part-time for the Council two years ago. Her transition back to work was helped by the fact that her husband, who also works flexible hours, has been able to help with childcare arrangements. A. converted to full-time when her daughter started school but her hours are still flexible, an aspect of the job she enjoys. A. has undertaken a part-time management course paid for by the Council and has attended a number of training days. Most of the courses she has attended have been external ones, paid for out of the Council training budget.

A. is responsible for five permanent and 20 part-time staff, many of them seasonal workers on fixed-term contracts (cleaners, farm assistants, kitchen staff, cafeteria staff, workers with animals, house demonstrators). The seasonal staff tend to be groups who like flexible working: older men and women, students, young people on work experience and young people who want to work with animals. Many return every year. A. tries to ensure that all staff get all the training they need. This usually involves induction training, specific training days, e.g. on food hygiene, and training on the job.

A. finds that financial planning is becoming an increasingly important factor in her job.

B. is a graduate who returned to work part-time in 1989 when her youngest child was four-and-a-half. She now works 25 hours a week but is thinking of reducing this for domestic reasons. B. works on a flexi-time basis in Planning and Property Services, where she is concerned with planning control and assessing the strategic implications of Council planning. The section is small and all staff are professional and highly specialised. She is currently the only part-time planner in the section.

B. has taken a three-year, part-time diploma course in planning paid for by the Council. Since returning from her career break she has attended day courses on changes in planning, environmental assessment, local planning enquiries, planning applications, word-processing, spread sheets, assertiveness and mentoring. She has also attended the day course for part-timers on Managing Yourself and Other People but would have preferred it to have been for both full- and part-time employees: 'All the women had the same problems. We could have shared our part-time experience with others'.

In B.'s section, details on relevant courses are circulated and people are at liberty to apply. In some cases where gaps are spotted, all section staff will attend a course. B. has been able to participate in any training relevant to or necessary for her job. Most of her training has been externally organised. She particularly appreciates the fact that the Council supported her attendance at a Royal Town Planning Institute summer school: 'It must be one of the most enlightened employers around.'

B. was very satisfied with all the training for personal and professional development she had received. She was not sure, however, whether part-time workers in all grades would have equal access to training and whether one would be able as a part-timer to reach the highest management tiers.

C. is a manager in the Careers Service, a section with about 70 staff, a third of whom work flexi-time. She has three children and has taken three separate career breaks. Her youngest children attend a nursery part-funded by the County Council, a situation, she claims, which has enabled her to return to work. She now works about 18 hours a week.

C. reports directly to the County Council Careers Manager and can choose the training courses she goes on. Most of the courses she has attended have, out of choice, been specific to the careers service rather than management courses. Any constraints she has experienced in relation to training have arisen from personal circumstances rather than from

any blocks presented by the employer. She described the County Council's policies on women returners as wonderful and has found the organisation very supportive towards staff development. She wondered, however, whether this was restricted to manager grades and was doubtful whether lower grade staff had as much autonomy to identify and pursue their own training requirements. In her section some support staff had complained that training details were disseminated to managers rather than to all staff.

C.'s original post disappeared in the organisational restructuring and a new one was created. This focuses on training and central services support for careers service staff. Part of C.'s responsibility is to set up training courses for careers advisers. These include day-release, distance learning and in-service training. She has found that flexi-time presents some problems, since, logistically, not everyone can attend training at the same time and it is expensive to keep repeating the same course. Sometimes courses are offered twice to maximise exposure. A lot of training in the service is not formal and involves skills updates.

D., who has two children, is an environmental co-ordinator in Corporate Services, a section with between 20 and 30 people. Originally full-time, she now works 20 hours a week in a department where everyone is on flexi-time (although no men are currently working part-time). She mentioned that a number of problems had occurred in the section as a result of organisational restructuring. These related to different lines of accountability, physical relocation and loss of facilities.

For her job D. had taken a certificated management course (nine days) and courses in word-processing, decision-making and finance. All her training has been financed by the Council and has been self-directed. Like other interviewees she was unsure whether lower grade workers had similar opportunities: 'I don't know how far down the organisation it goes and whether people would take training unless they were encouraged to. They may not think it applies to them.'

D. was very happy with the training she had received and felt, like other interviewees, that any constraints on her participation have been personal rather than organisational in nature. However, she was frustrated by the lack of career structures in her work. She would like to change her post and, eventually, to work full-time in one where she can use her foreign language skills. She was interested in doing an MSc degree part-time or on day-release.

E. is an administrative assistant in Planning and Property Services. She has two children. She worked full-time for the Council before taking a 10-year career break, after which she returned to a part-time post (18.5

hours). Since returning to work, E. has attended a number of updating courses, the Managing Self and Others course for part-timers (which was suggested to her), a computing course and a course on Introduction to Planning for Clerical and Administrative Staff. She finds managers very accommodating about training so long as it is relevant to the job. As with other interviewees, E. is more deterred by domestic constraints than by employer objections from taking up training. She finds combining work and domestic responsibilities difficult and 'shies away' from courses that last longer than the school-day. She also appeared to have some inhibitions about putting herself forward for training because of her part-time status.

E. chose the job because of the flexibility of the hours but now feels trapped for that very reason. There is no opportunity to develop her current job but she finds her employer so accommodating that she is reluctant to seek change, as she is worried that she might not find the same flexibility elsewhere. Ideally, E. would like to change to a job involving more contact with the general public and wishes there were possibilities in her current job to be taken on-site to see the results of her section's work. D. is unaware of any opportunities for promotion or transfer between sections and is worried about the career consequences of having taken such a long career break. She believes that the biggest problem women returners face is the lack of general careers advice after the career break: 'No one sat down and talked it through with me. I would have liked to have said to someone: "I worked for the County Council before. What are my options?"'

F., who has two children under eight, is a senior research and evaluation officer in Social Services, where she works 29 hours a week. She took two maternity breaks in another organisation before joining OCC in 1989. She finds the hours suit her at the moment but would like to work full-time at a later date. She is the only part-time worker in a unit of seven people, although several of the others are on flexi-time. Flexi-time fits the nature of the job, which can involve working weekends and evenings and visiting people out of office hours.

Since joining the Council F. has taken several management training courses: an eight-day National Employers Board Supervisory (NEBS) course which she considered of very high quality and a year-long, externally organised, certificated management course which she found less satisfactory. In addition, she has followed courses in computing and recruitment and selection. Some of these she chose herself; others were suggested to her by her manager. She has been able to discuss her training needs during appraisals and has found that she has generally been able to pursue training that interests her. The main constraints on her take-up

of training have been organisational in nature. She referred to the 'constant upheavals' caused by changes in legislation such as Community Care and by financial constraints which have led to cuts, early retirements and the demoralisation and insecurity of staff. F. feels that although the County Council pays a lot of attention to human resource development, other pressures, such as financial cuts and legislative changes, are undermining this thrust. While she is satisfied with the training and development she has received and considers the County Council to be an excellent employer, she recognises that her prospects of progression are limited because of the current economic situation: 'If people leave, there's a freeze on jobs and they disappear. There's no opportunity to move up or even sideways at the moment, except in new areas such as Community Care'. F. would welcome advice from an outside careers advisory service on possible career moves.

G. has worked in the personnel department since 1982, working a variety of hours between 15 and 32.5. She started as a graduate trainee at administrative assistant level and has found that part-time working has not been a promotion barrier. However, she feels that flexible working practices in the organisation have not been matched by flexible training practices. Formal training typically takes place between 9am and 5pm, and although there are some part-time courses, the vast majority of managerial courses are on this model. Thus, while part-time employees have access to training, the real problem is whether they can take it up. G. wondered how many people may have been prevented from participating in training because of the hours:

> *The one-day course and 10-day course are still the norm. We have so many part-time workers, why are we still using these conventions? Why is full-time training still taken as the norm? Timing is a major constraint. You can make employment flexible but it's difficult to make a training course flexible. Do we make it easy enough for people to attend training? We're in danger of discriminating against single parents because of timing. We're good at encouraging people to get qualifications; we'll give people time off and pay for release but the timing of courses is so difficult for women with children. FE colleges haven't yet taken this on board. It's very difficult because you're battling against something which is institutionalised. It's clear that most people get the training they need, but at what cost?*

Where training is concerned, G. also perceives a split between the corporate responsibilities and policies of the Council and the responsibilities of individual departments. In the latter, the effectiveness of

training and development for people below management level depends on the competence of individual training officers and managers: 'This is one of the perils of having a devolved structure.' Although it is Council policy to make training opportunities available, some managers will not grant release for the longer programmes, for example the Step Forward programme for clerical and secretarial workers, which can be taken in one-day or five-day blocks: 'At this level it's OK for people to go off for a half day here and there, but for a whole programme it's different.'

Another problem G. recognises is that development programmes may raise expectations that are not achievable in the current economic climate. The Step Forward programme has shown that a lot of people are working beneath their capabilities but there are no clear development paths after taking the programme: 'It's a classic case of raising unrealistic expectations. Total vertical progression is not realistic these days. People may have to leave the organisation for progression.'

Case Study 3

Sheffield City Council

(a) Take Ten Course

Date of visit: 25 May 1993

Interviews with: Two course tutors and 12 trainees on the course

(These courses are usually held at Fairfield House, Loxley College, but this session took place in the Education Department of the City Council and involved a visit to the Town Hall. Loxley College has just reorganised to become part of the city-wide Sheffield College.)

'Take Ten' and 'Take Fifteen' courses are designed for employees of any of the City Council Departments, but trainees come mainly from Family and Community Services, Housing and Education. Most of the employees attending the courses come from low-paid and low status sections and have no formal educational qualifications. All such employees, whether full- or part-time, are entitled to attend the course. Groups can be as large as 30 but the numbers are often lower. It is becoming increasingly difficult for departments to release staff for the course. All participants are paid for attending. The courses have been funded by the City Council but this may be changed under re-organisation of further education provision. No fees are charged to individuals or to their departments.

'Take Ten' is held on one day a week for 10 weeks and 'Take Fifteen' for one morning a week for 15 weeks. Take Ten is mixed; Take Fifteen is for women part-time workers. No Take Fifteen course is running at present.

The main aims of the courses are to aid personal development as well as to raise awareness of the Council. They lead to a credit from South Yorkshire Open College Federation at Level 2.

This is a summary of a day spent with one group of 12 trainees on a Take Ten course.

The first part of the session was spent in sharing work experiences of the previous week: for example, one person had had his hours increased from part-time to a full-time temporary appointment.

This was followed by a review of the previous week's session, which had covered the details of Council funding and the changes and constraints being experienced by the City Council. It had included a visit to a housing project and a discussion of the current sale/rent provision.

After this the group split into two sub-groups to prepare questions for the four City Councillors who were due to join the course later that morning. Once joined by the councillors, the participants questioned them in detailed about their roles.

These interviews were followed by a conducted tour of the Town Hall and lunch in the staff canteen.

In the afternoon small groups of course participants visited several City Council departments and initiatives – the Community Safety Unit; the Crucible Theatre; the Red Tape Studio and the Family and Community Services Department. On returning to the course, each sub-group reported on their visit. The rest of the session was spent planning options for the next few weeks.

The nature of the programme made it difficult to interview individuals formally so opportunities to talk to them were taken as they walked to the various locations and over lunch.

Interviews with the Trainees

A. is a young woman in her 20s with a small child. She has no formal qualifications. She is employed by Family and Community Services and has been in some kind of care work since leaving school. Currently she is employed part-time. She has received basic training from her department and taken some other courses, including those leading to some elements of a care NVQ. She would like to work full-time as she needs the money and would welcome any further training. She has no plans to change her job at the moment.

B. is a woman in her 30s with children aged eight and 12. She has no formal qualifications. She has been a part-time clerk in the Housing Department for the past two years, working mornings only. In the past, she has had other secretarial and clerical jobs, plus some factory work. However, neither in her current job nor in any previous job has she had any training. As her children get older and she prepares for full-time work, she would like advice and guidance about the courses that are available. The Take Ten course will provide this.

C. is a young woman in her 20s without qualifications. After school she did YTS but has never had a 'proper' job. For the past two years she has

worked part-time as a casual cleaner. Her only experience of training was on YTS and subsequently at a Job Club. She would welcome any kind of training if it led to a job.

D. is a young man in his 20s. Since school he has had a variety of jobs, mainly in caring work. Currently he is a residential care assistant, a post he has held for two years. After six months in the job he had one week's training. While working he has gained A-Levels through part-time study at a local college and is about to start a full-time course in Film Studies at a local university.

E. is 57 years old. He left school at 15 with no qualifications. His employment history is varied: vanboy, builder and butcher. He has also run his own newsagent's shop. He always wanted to be a male nurse and for years has done voluntary work with the blind and caring for the terminally ill. For six years he has been in care work, the last two with the City Council. He has just acquired a full-time temporary post. Previous training includes a basic course in care, an advanced care certificate and a qualification in first aid. He would like to gain a qualification in care but has to wait as the demand for places is high.

Sheffield City Council

(b) Family and Community Services (Social Services Department)

Date of visit: 9 July 1993

Interviews with: Family and Community Services Principal Training Officer, two other trainers and a group of 12 Home Care Workers (HCWs) (formerly known as Home Helps), on the one-week Core Course at the Johnson Centre

To update training to deal with recent legislation such as Community Care, Children, and Disabled Persons' Acts, Sheffield Family and Community Services has a new Training Plan involving NVQs for all its staff, whatever the hours worked. To ensure that the workforce is trained to prescribed standards, the plan envisages a training route for all staff. Departmental staff are to have clear programmes of induction, basic and advanced skills training linked to the appropriate levels of NVQ, and all qualified staff will have induction and post-qualifying training. All

training will be accredited by CCETSW registration. Individual training and development profiles will be extended to all staff and the department is examining the possibility of aiming for the Investors in People award.

There is always a waiting list for appointing HCWs. Many of them are women returners because they can fit the hours around their other responsibilities. The main criteria in selection is their experience of 'caring' and their attitudes towards those needing care.

In general, HCWs have little training, low status and work in isolation. Their duties have changed from that of cleaners to a range of tasks requiring diverse skills in caring for the disabled and elderly in their own homes. The tasks they do and the environment in which they work depends on which part of the city they work in. They all work part-time and their hours are individually arranged; some work for very few hours a week; others work almost full-time hours.

They are organised in different localities but all the training is centrally provided. Most prefer this, as it enables them to meet other workers from different parts of the city. All employees are expected to attend training courses, for which they are paid. This is not a problem, and workers generally prefer a week of full-time training to spaced-out, part-time provision. Some training modules are compulsory (e.g. Core course; HIV/AIDS; Equal Opportunities and Health and Safety); others can be selected by individuals.

All training courses are planned and presented by trainers in the Department, using in-house material. There is also an extensive 'training the trainers' programme. Some of their material is used by other local authorities.

The Department is moving towards NVQs where relevant, and local managers are being trained as assessors. However, assessing HCWs is difficult as they do a range of tasks and work in comparative isolation. It would be difficult to assess by observation in someone's home.

Interview with the Group of 12 HCW Trainees

It was the last day of the one-week core course. Participants came from all over the city and few knew each other before the course began. Most were in their 40s; a couple were younger than this and one or two older. Some had been HCWs for many years (14 years in one case). Most had several years' experience.

Only one woman appeared to have had any other training (hairdressing) and another had attended several adult education courses. Two of the

younger women had been on a Take Ten course provided by Sheffield City Council.

All of the women had enjoyed their current course, which had contained a mixed programme of factual 'care' information with assertiveness training and personal development. All felt that it should have been available when they started working for Family and Community Services and that it was far better than their initial induction to the job (i.e. how to cook/clean, etc.).

All of the women wanted recognition for the job they were doing and resented the low status of their work. They would willingly work towards accreditation if it enhanced the public image of their role.

Case Study 4

Inland Revenue, Leicester

Date of visit: 1 April 1993

Interviews with: The officer in charge, the resident trainer and four staff (two part-time and two temporary)

This office of the Inland Revenue specialises in Income Tax rebate claims. Staff respond to letters or phone calls from customers. Most of the work is on VDUs and computers. Publicity is now used to make the public aware of their right to a rebate and phone lines are open following specific advertising campaigns. The office employs approximately 50 permanent staff (full and part-time) and 45 temporary staff on what are called 'recurring appointments'. Of the 50 permanent staff about 50 per cent are part-time. Almost all the recurring appointments are full-time staff. About equal numbers of women and men are on recurring appointments. Recurring appointments run for six months and are repeated for a second year (i.e. each person works 12 months in any 24). This is to coincide with the busiest time – from April each year.

Permanent staff are often recruited from former employees ('re-instatees'). Individuals either apply to the office or are approached by the office as need arises. Re-instatees are placed according to the previous employment and current job. All jobs on the permanent staff are open to part-timers who work as required from 15 hours a week upwards. Hours can be varied during school holidays. Recurring appointments are offered only to the unemployed. Temporary workers on recurring appointments are placed in three grades as follows:

Revenue Assistant (RA): for those with two GCE O-Levels or equivalent or by test

Revenue Officer (RO): for those with five GCE O-Levels or equivalent

Revenue Executive (RE): for those with two or more A-Levels (some REs have degrees).

The Inland Revenue operates an equal opportunities policy and recruitment is intended to match the local population. In Leicester this is 30 per cent Asian. At least 10 per cent of staff are registered disabled. There are

no age barriers. The office has a deliberate policy of recruiting former employees for permanent posts.

All staff receive basic training. For temporary staff this involves induction, or an updating if it is their second recurring appointment. Training is in three phases. RAs receive Phase 1, ROs phases 1 and 2 and REs phases 1, 2 and 3. For all re-instatees, training is updating and induction into their new role. Permanent staff, whether full- or part-time can apply for further training, for upgrading and for new posts. No accreditation or NVQs are available.

All Inland Revenue training is provided in-house and designed centrally (in Peterborough) but delivered locally. This office has its own resident trainer and fully equipped training room. All training is undertaken in work time but part-time workers may have to attend full-time courses (for which they are paid). Most of the training consists of computer packages and other distance material, supported by tutorials and on-the-job experience. All training is monitored and evaluated centrally. The local trainer monitors local training needs.

Progression routes are available for all permanent staff. The current officer in charge was herself a part-time woman returner. However, progression eventually depends on working full-time.

The main constraint to recruitment and training is that of available jobs. Staff are recruited and trained in response to demand. In future, recurring appointments are likely to be replaced by single six-month contracts because staff may not be needed for the second period.

Interviews with staff

Recurring appointments (temporary full-time)

A. is a male in his early 20s on his second appointment. He has A-Levels and when he moved to Leicester was unemployed. He expressed gratitude at having a job even though it was temporary and would stay with Inland Revenue if it were possible. He would take any training if it led to a job.

B. is male and in his mid-30s. He was originally trained in electronics but was made redundant. He is glad to have work but wants a 'proper' job.

Permanent part-time staff

C. is female and in her late 30s with school-age children. She works three days a week but not in school holidays. She previously worked for Inland Revenue and did not intend to return but was offered the post. Although she had to do longer hours on initial retraining, her job is very flexible and good for part-timers. She does not want further training or advancement while her children are still at school.

D. is female and in her 40s. She has older school-age children. She works 30 hours a week but less in school holidays. She was formerly employed by Inland Revenue and approached them when she needed work again. She feels she can go on any further training if she wishes but usually it needs to be specific. She may increase her hours and seek advancement in future.

Case Study 5

ASDA

(a) ASDA Head Office

Date of visit: 20 April 1993

Interview with: Training Projects Manager

ASDA has about 65,000 employees, over 60 per cent of whom are part-time. Eighty per cent of part-time staff are women. Women comprise 80 per cent of shopfloor workers and men 99 per cent of senior management. Currently over 90 per cent of managers are full-time (average 45 hours). ASDA is aware of this imbalance and there is commitment from the Chief Executive to change. Already more women are coming forward to General Store Manager Assessment Centres. Some full-timers have been able to return to work part-time after maternity leave with no loss of seniority. Many women returning to work after a career break start by working evenings and subsequently switch to daytime hours. It has been found that members of the same family often work in the same store.

Training is considered very important by the company: 'Everybody knows us and we can't afford to get anything wrong. It's a very competitive field'. ASDA provides training materials and guides to each store. The training programmes are more flexible than in the past and are designed to meet the needs of regions and individuals and ensure that the company encourages people of the right quality. Managers are appraised on how they have developed staff and this is part of their own development plan. They are expected to spot potential in staff and encourage them to progress by following relevant training or qualifications.

All ASDA employees follow compulsory training modules (which require good literacy skills) and have a training record card. They can agree their training notes and decide whether they have received enough training: 'We assess people in the natural course of their job and give feedback on what they did. This is a great motivator. People feel they're worth something and have something to show for their work'. Staff have regular appraisals and the right to continuous training. Day-release is available to enable people to achieve relevant qualifications at local colleges (e.g. City and Guilds Bakery).

In each store there are team trainers who are also operatives. These look after new recruits and have been found very useful in helping women

make the transition back into work. Trainers have flexibility in the amount of training they provide.

ASDA has 'a very skilled and capable workforce' but most have only their internal record card to show for their experience. The company was, however, the first multiple grocer to award NVQs in Retail Levels 1 and 2. NVQs were introduced in 1989 and piloted in up to 30 stores. The piloting process has not been without problems. It has proved a 'long, laborious' job to get people to Level 1. About 100 staff have currently achieved it, mostly women part-time workers with no previous qualifications, who have worked for ASDA for a considerable time. There are no plans to extend NVQ to all stores for several reasons: 'There are too many hoops and it's too expensive at the moment'. Feedback from stores suggests that the system is complicated because of the different stages involved, the bureaucracy and form-filling: 'If we were to offer the full range of NVQs there are so many lead bodies and forms, etc. that it would be a nonsense'.

NVQ is not considered sufficiently broad, and a wider scheme, on the Credit Accumulation and Transfer model, would be preferred. Although Levels 1 and 2 have been found generally flexible, some of parts of Level 3 (e.g. units on business and administration and international credit transfer) are deemed irrelevant: 'We'll only assess people on units that are relevant'.

Nevertheless, the idea of NVQs is supported and the general principles are being incorporated into ASDA's own training process. The company is also exploring the possibility of issuing its own certificate leading towards a City and Guilds award. However, enthusiasm for qualifications is muted: 'Experience in a multiple retailer is as valuable as a piece of paper to us. That is the most valuable and transferable'.

ASDA has a Staff Development Scheme (SDS) for employees aged over 17 with 12 months' full- or part-time retail experience, at least half of which must have been with ASDA. The scheme, which is currently being revised, prepares employees who are able to work for at least 30 hours a week for management positions. Preference for such positions is given to internal applicants. There is a 'constant flow' of people through into management and senior management, but these are currently mainly men and the range of full-time posts is limited.

ASDA

(b) Superstore, Brighton

Date of visit: 24 May 1993

Interviews with: Customer Services Manager and six staff

The store has 375 staff, 313 of them part-time and the majority women. It is still increasing the number of part-time posts. Hours are very flexible and rotas are continually changing. Many of the supervisors, now called team trainers, also work part-time.

In recruiting staff, the store looks for customer care qualities and also stresses initiative and problem-solving.

There is a company induction day for all new staff, who follow a self-learning starter package which they have to fill in themselves and then have validated. Following this, specific training is given in different areas of work, with the stress on multiskilling. For example, all staff are trained on the till. Staff undertake both on-the-job training and independent learning. For each area there are self-learning books to work through at one's own pace. These are validated and recorded on individual training records. Staff are appraised after the first six months and annually thereafter.

Fortnightly team briefings are used by managers to disseminate information (e.g. new product knowledge, new procedures) to staff and these involve a two-way process to allow workers to feed back their views. There are sometimes difficulties in disseminating new information to staff who only work certain shifts (e.g. Friday nights and Saturdays). A store training book records all training and team briefings and this identifies any employees who have consistently missed out on training. Steps are then taken to make up the deficit.

Although NVQs are available, the store has not yet progressed very far with the qualification. The introductory meeting for staff was cancelled when the Personnel Officer left, and as she has not yet been replaced, the process never really got off the ground. Currently a few staff are involved in taking the qualification but are not progressing very well. This is attributed to several factors: it requires extra time to fit in NVQs with the job and flexible hours, and people doing NVQs feel isolated. Managers have not had the time to dedicate to helping people and assessment has proved difficult, as the store has to rely on a visiting assessor who has

cancelled several meetings: 'If it's up and running and there are lots of assessors there is more encouragement'.

ASDA has recently introduced a Training Skills course for trainers to identify and measure competence. This does not lead to a qualification but, according to staff, will potentially make the implementation of NVQs easier.

There are some possibilities for progression in the store. Succession planning means that staff in strategic positions have successors who act like understudies and are ready to step into the post when people leave. Senior staff are encouraged to look for potential in employees and suggest the idea of becoming a successor to likely candidates.

Three employees at the store are currently following the SDS programme.

All employees leaving employment have an exit interview with personnel staff.

Interviews with Staff

A., a woman in her 40s, has worked part-time at the store for five-and-a-half years, starting as a check-out supervisor and gradually increasing her hours. Three weeks before the interview she had changed to a full-time management position. The change was suggested to her by senior staff who recognised her skills and potential. A. has followed several supervisor training courses and appraisal courses and found that she enjoyed training people. She describes ASDA as a responsive company which offers trainers a great deal of help and guidance:

> *The central training department listens and has identified the areas needing development and improvement. We can feed back our views and they are very receptive. They give us the tools to work with – quality training. A small amount of quality training is better than quantity.*

A. appreciates the fact that opportunities are offered to part-time workers with recognised potential. She finds ASDA is very supportive of its employees, who work as a team. There are no strong status distinctions and 'them and us' attitudes between managers and staff, although she has found that some male colleagues have an 'attitude problem' towards women being promoted as managers. She describes ASDA's new way of working as customer-led, opening doors to more staff and giving people more responsibility and more power to use their initiative. This is in contrast to the former way of working, which was more rigid and

procedure-led. However, she has found that some male managers have not readily accepted the 'front-end' emphasis.

B. is a young woman without qualifications working in the tobacco and confectionary kiosk. She has started an NVQ in retail at the suggestion of the former Personnel Officer but is now floundering through lack of support: 'Nothing's been done'. The roving assessor, who is very busy, has cancelled several visits and there are not enough people in the store who can advise and assess: 'We need them because it's new to us'. B. feels that NVQs have not been sufficiently promoted in the store. The cancelled introductory meeting has had a detrimental effect on take-up and there is no encouragement or incentive to staff to undertake NVQs. She feels that future progress will depend on staff seeing colleagues successfully involved in NVQs.

C. is a dedicated trainer in the hard goods section. She works flexi-time, putting in 20 hours weekly within seven days. She started as a shopfloor assistant several years ago when there was no training, just 'learning with Nellie'. She then became an audit clerk before moving to dedicated trainer. She takes care of the general and company induction of new staff, staying with them for approximately three weeks before passing them on to a supervisor. She is also concerned with staff appraisals at which employees' aspirations and possible career paths are discussed:

> *They all get a really good start in the company. It's up to us to identify people who need training and make sure they get it. As a trainer you work alongside all staff and know what knowledge and potential they have. We don't force people who don't want more responsibility.*

C. has found that many part-timers – those working 'twilight' shifts (6pm–10pm), Sunday staff and evening (5pm–8.15pm) staff – tend to be students or people with young families or another job. These groups tend not to want more responsibility. The staff seeking progression are more likely to be younger employees who have not done well at school and want to take advantage of ASDA training, and older women whose children have grown up.

C. considers that training has improved tremendously since the introduction of dedicated trainers and she finds the ASDA training skills workshops very useful. She has observed that whereas two years ago there was a high staff turnover at the store, employees now stay for longer because of the training.

D., who works on the check-out, has young children. She has recently undertaken induction training and has completed the new workbook on

checkout services in about seven hours, although she found it was a problem having to do it on the shopfloor, because 'customers keep thinking you're available'. D. considers the ASDA training manuals are of very high quality.

D. would like a job with greater responsibility when her children are older. She contrasted the situation at ASDA with that at a rival multiple grocers where she had previously worked. There, part-time staff had no way of putting themselves forward or being promoted unless nominated by managers; young men with no shopfloor experience often came in as managers, arousing the resentment of more experienced staff, and there was a negative training culture among part-time employees, with those seeking training considered to be 'getting above themselves'.

E., who is in her 30s, is a full-time supervisor who until recently worked part-time at ASDA while pursuing a course at the former polytechnic. She is interested in a management position and has been following the SDS programme, which she considers good, although finding the time to do it and getting other people involved has proved difficult: 'The problem is finding time in a busy environment like this and getting busy people to sit down and give you feedback'.

F., a woman in her 30s, has progressed from kiosk assistant to deputy manager of Customer Services. She has also followed the SDS programme, which she found required a lot of drive and self-motivation. She considers the programme needs more interaction and that there should be more feedback.

Some of the women who had been promoted in the store spoke of the difficulties they had experienced with some male managers here and in organisations where they previously worked, who resented the fact that women were rising from lower grades. These are some of the comments recorded:

> *A few weeks ago I was an hourly-paid worker; now I'm a manager. Some male managers find this hard to accept, although they came through the same process. They don't give you any support. They put blocks in your way; make life intolerable.*
>
> *My impression is that it's much harder for a woman than a man to get into management, because it's so male-dominated. Women definitely have to work harder than men to get anywhere. We don't get support from some male managers.*
>
> *It's a question of body language. Male managers want to dominate every situation. There are a few who don't like women*

getting on and think we should all be at home looking after children.

My experience (outside ASDA) is that male managers of 19 with no experience and a few vocational qualifications will go to the top. Women with skills and experience in the job and no vocational qualifications hit the promotion barrier.

ASDA

(c) ASDA Stores, Perry Barr, Birmingham

Date of visit: 28 June 1993

Interviews with: The Personnel Officer and two women employees

This store employs about 460 staff, of whom about 445 are on hourly rates. Two-thirds of these are part-time, which means anything from eight to 38 hours a week. Some staff work between three-and-a-half to seven hours on Sunday only.

The Perry Barr store is different from all other ASDA stores because it is piloting a new, 'flattened' management structure. This means that each department has a manager but there are no supervisory grades. All employees are expected to be responsible for the quality of their work and are trained and paid accordingly. The store has a fully equipped training room.

Staff are recruited to different departments depending on their experience and ability. Some departments (e.g. butchery, bakery) need specific experience; in others it is personality and other retail experience that is valued. The firm has an equal opportunities policy for all its departments, although most of its employees are women. It takes staff up to the age of 70.

All employees of ASDA receive training as soon as they are employed. A one-day company induction programme is followed by departmental training while on the job. Training is supervised by the departmental manager. All the training programmes and training materials are produced centrally. Training is competence-based but not yet linked to NVQs.

Within each department a team of trainers are responsible for the induction of new staff, who follow a programme devised for them. New members of staff proceed at their own rate and may take from six to eight months to become competent. This includes 'shadowing' experienced staff. Training for all staff is ongoing as new procedures and equipment are developed.

Staff can be supported on other training if it is relevant to their job, e.g. day-release at a local college or further in-house packaged courses. All staff are appraised by their departmental manager but their career path often depends on their circumstances (the number of hours they can work, etc.)

Staff are paid while training if it falls outside their normal hours (e.g. for Sunday staff training on weekdays).

Interviews with Staff

A. is 46 and has worked for ASDA since 1989. She was educated at a local grammar school but left at 15 to become a hairdresser, for which she has a City and Guilds qualification. Other work experience was in retail in a large departmental store. After 10 years out of paid work while her children were small, she returned part-time to work in a pub. She came to ASDA for three years, worked briefly for Sainsbury's, then returned to ASDA at Perry Barr. She has worked on the check out, on grocery and on toiletries.

Outside work, A. has attended several adult education classes – in typing, cake decoration and French. She is very involved in the Guides and has attended various training courses with them. She would be interested in gaining NVQs if she knew how to go about gaining the qualification.

B. is 28. She left school at 16 and has had several part-time and full-time jobs in retail and in warehouse work. Having been made redundant in a small local shop, she came to ASDA in 1986. She took a short break when her daughter was born. She works part-time (25 hours a week) but would work longer hours if there were childcare or after-school facilities. B. would like to gain qualifications in office work and find work in that area. She is currently looking for evening classes locally.

Case Study 6

Safeway plc

(a) Safeway Store, Brighton

Date of visit: 15 June 1993

Interviews with: the Personnel Representative (Training Manager) and two part-time staff

Safeway plc, part of the Argyll group, was created in 1988 with the amalgamation of Argyll Stores Ltd and Safeway Stores Ltd. It trades as Safeway, Presto and Galbraith. The company, which has about 67,000 employees, operates in 29 districts.

It is a member of Opportunity 2000 and a task group of line managers has established an action plan to ensure that women employees achieve their full potential.

Safeway is an approved Training Organisation and an active member of the Management Charter Initiative (MCI). New policies and operations are disseminated on a cascade basis. District Managers and/or District Personnel Officers meet once a month and then train staff training managers or store managers. They then train departmental managers who train staff. Although procedures are established centrally, training practice and job roles vary according to the size of stores and according to individual managers.

This store has 120 employees, with roughly equal numbers working full- and part-time. The number of part-timers is steadily growing and Safeway is tending to eliminate full-time jobs, replacing them by part-time posts. Part-time employees work a variety of hours. Most are women with children and students. Students tend to work in the evenings and on Saturdays, while women tend to work during week-days. Many women employees also have another part-time job.

Older women and those with families are found to be a stable permanent workforce and continuity of temporary labour is achieved by employing first-year degree or A-Level students, who often return to the store for several years running. In recruiting: 'We look for some experience with the public, not qualifications. We expect a basic education, and look at their interests and the jobs they've had. Communication skills are very important.'

As in other Safeway stores, all staff undertake the Headstart induction programme. On the first day they work through the Headstart workbook under the supervision of the Training Manager. The following three days are spent on induction in their respective departments and each has a training card to complete. Younger trainees in this store can take a Retail Apprenticeship Programme leading to NVQ Level 2 but no one is currently undertaking this and it appeared that few of the staff were aware of the possibility.

Management trainees follow an open learning work book linked to the MCI. Departmental managers are full-time.

Progression for part-time staff is possible but depends on their flexibility and ability to work extra hours. Most part-time employees wish to remain working part-time. Some employees (including a part-time cleaner aged 29) are taking courses such as typing and languages in the evenings at their own expense to increase their level of skills.

Interviews with Staff

A. is a woman in her 20s who has worked at the store for three-and-a-half years. She is currently an assistant in the delicatessen, having previously worked part-time (20 hours) at the checkout. She had applied for and obtained a full-time post but had to give it up when she lost her childminder. She is now working 25 hours a week and is happy with these hours as it means she can take her child to school and collect her. A. has some O-Levels and a typing qualification. She feels that the training she has received at Safeway is adequate but would like some more qualifications to better herself. She would like to train in word-processing and move to an office job.

B., a woman in her 20s, works for 20 hours a week at the checkout and has been at the store for 16 months. She has one child aged seven. She had previously started a hairdressing qualification but could not complete it because of lack of childcare. She is happy with her current job because of the hours and flexibility. She considers the training good and adequate for the tasks she needs to perform. She is bitter, however, that lack of childcare facilities have reduced her employment choices and prospects and currently prevent her from training in her own time to do something better: 'In other countries they have nurseries for working mothers, why haven't we? It would be very difficult for me to study in my own time. After work I pick up my daughter, go home, make the tea, then my husband comes home and by the time you've cleared up it's nearly bedtime.'

Safeway plc

(b) Safeway Store, Hastings

Date of visit: 15 July 1993

Interviews with: the Personnel Representative (Training Manager) and four staff

This store employs 220 staff, 120 of them part-time (working a variety of hours from eight a week upwards). There are also about 10 temporary staff, mostly students, who work on fixed-term contracts. The store is gradually increasing its number of part-time workers to achieve more flexibility. Currently there are approximately equal numbers of male and female staff. Male part-timers tend to be students. Most of the night shift-workers are also male, as are departmental managers (full-time posts). Psychometric tests are now conducted with all job applicants.

All staff undertake Headstart training, with induction (in groups of about six) conducted by the personnel representative. This lasts for about 12 hours and includes interactive sessions, work on the Headstart workbook and a video, *Welcome to Safeway*. Staff are inducted in the structure of the company, and areas such as dress and personal hygiene, terms of employment, security, theft, health and safety. The next part of training involves core skills, including policies on customer care, refund and replace, price indications, codes, refrigeration management, recycling and multi-link (savings on multiple buys). Each employee has a basic skills training card relevant to the department they are working in. During the first three months they have three assessments by departmental managers to see that they have completed all parts of this. Completion is tied in with remuneration.

There is limited movement from part-time to full-time posts in the store. Sales assistants can with special training become senior sales assistants or supervisors, but only if there is a vacancy. Succession planning is linked to annual appraisals at which further training needs and promotion prospects are assessed. Currently progression prospects in the store are few due to 'stagnation' attributed to the recession.

All staff training managers (soon to be known as personnel training managers) are trained NVQ assessors. NVQs are available, but 'this is not highlighted' and none have been taken in the store. The failure to promote NVQs is attributed by senior staff to an expected lack of job vacancies on completion and the fact that skilled areas leading to NVQs such as

butchery no longer exist in the store. Although the company is developing another apprentice programme for NVQ this is currently 'on hold'.

Interviews with Staff

A., a woman in her 50s, works as a cashier for 36 hours a week having gradually built these up from 10 when her family were younger. Her working hours were chosen to fit in with her family commitments and public transport times. She has no qualifications and considers the training she has received as adequate for the work she does. She has no interest in further training.

B., a student of architecture aged about 20, works regularly at Safeway as a cashier during his vacations on a fixed term contract. He has received induction training but no updating since: 'Nothing much changes here'. B. does not consider any other training would be useful for the tasks he has to perform.

C. is also a student of about 20. He is working on a three-month contract in the liquor store. He has received the usual induction training and everything else he has learnt has been on the job. He feels this is adequate for the job and is not interested in more training.

D., an Asian woman in her 40s, is a check-out supervisor working full-time after previously working part-time. This is her first full-time job. Before starting at Safeway four years ago she worked part-time in another large grocery retail company where: 'the training was much the same'. D. supervises and helps to train cashiers and has a wide range of other responsibilities including paper work relating to handling cash and customer service. D. has no British qualifications (although she has overseas ones which are not recognised in this country). She had not heard of NVQs but mentioned that she was interested in taking a City and Guilds qualification. She was also considering taking some evening courses in English and Maths at her own expense, having seen leaflets left at the store by the local adult education service.

Case Study 7

W.H. Smith Head Office, Swindon

Date of visit: 14 July 1993

Interview with: Retail Training Co-ordinator

W.H. Smith retails books, maps, newspapers, journals and magazines, music, videos and office supplies. It employs about 13,500 sales staff, the majority of them part-time and female. The number of full-time employees has been steadily dropping and part-time employees now represent about 80 per cent of all staff. They are found to be a very stable workforce: 'We've got more stability with part-timers. They're more likely to stay with you'. Some temporary staff are also employed, usually on a fixed-term basis around the Christmas period.

The company operates a career break scheme whereby staff can either take 12 months' leave and return to a similar grade, or a break of up to five years and return at a similar grade (depending on vacancies and location), providing that they undertake two weeks' work experience every year.

The company is a member of Opportunity 2000 and has achieved IIP. There is a nursery at the head office site.

Training

All training is conducted on-site. The company operates in 15 areas, all of which have a training facility where training can be conducted in skills for the current job (e.g. products, systems operations, time management). There is also a separate training college for management development. The company publishes a training guide each year and a weekly programme which all branches follow. Information from head office is disseminated through team briefings, and down, through a cascade method, to staff, who get written briefings to add to their handbooks. All managers have productivity guidelines which they are expected to meet. There are therefore variations in the way training may be promoted in different areas.

All new staff members undertake internal training which is based on open learning packages. There are seven different packages, one for each product area. These are regularly updated. Employees work towards a

W.H. Smith training diploma – the equivalent of NVQ Level 2 – which usually takes between nine months and a year, or a Management Diploma, the equivalent of Level 3. The latter is for people in departmental manager roles which are full-time posts. These are held mainly by women, although men predominate at store manager and senior management level. The achievement of the diplomas is tied into the pay structure of the organisation. Between 800 and 900 diplomas are issued a year in the different departments.

There is a further studies scheme whereby the company will pay towards the costs of relevant study undertaken outside, and help towards provision of books.

Some time is allocated within working hours for work on open learning packages. However, finding time for Saturday staff to train has proved difficult and sometimes a quarter of an hour is provided before they start work. It has been found easier if Saturday staff undertake the diplomas in their own (unpaid) time.

Staff receive two appraisals a year by branch managers. These act as performance and development reviews at which aspirations can be expressed. Although most employees have a strong interest in training, upward career progression tends to be more likely among full-time staff: 'progression in retail always comes through mobility. This is more difficult for women.' However, the company claims it now offers more opportunities for part-time staff who can move into full-time jobs, such as supervisory posts, and are doing so to an increasing extent: 'We realise that people have greater expectations from their job than they used to and that we're very dependent on part-timers'.

NVQs

NVQs were introduced on a pilot basis over two years ago 'because this was the way the world was moving' and made available for all staff up to Level 2. About 150 members of sales staff have currently achieved Level 2. The company is also piloting Level 3, which no one at the time of interview had yet achieved.

NVQs were initially grafted onto existing training and there are now plans to make Level 2 mandatory for all new staff (except temporary staff, who receive only the induction package), although it will not be tied into pay structures like the existing internal training diplomas which will continue.

The Training Co-ordinator has reservations about a total investment in NVQs for a number of reasons. Having seen a number of changes in training policy over the years, she feels there could be further changes to the system, so wants to see how things develop. Secondly, it has proved difficult to integrate NVQs with internal training programmes since the W.H Smith open learning packages (for which accreditation has been unsuccessfully sought) are more knowledge- than competence-based. Some of the NVQ Retail units have also been found inappropriate:

> *The units on product knowledge are weak (although the revised unit is better than the original version which we piloted). There are no options in Level 3 and in Stockroom 1 you have to drive a forklift truck! There are creative ways round this but that's not the issue. Retail Level 4 assumes that branch managers have responsibility for a lot of things which in a large, successful, multi-site company they don't. Level 4 assumes you're generating policy when you're not.*

Another problem was the costs. Company department managers are all registered NVQ assessors but the costs of registering assessors with the TDLB are considered prohibitive:

> *We've registered ours with the National Retail Training Council. They've been on the training course but haven't been assessed as being competent. For this to happen they have to be assessed for the whole package and the costs are very high. Some industries are already insisting on total registration. This puts employers off and will be an obstacle.*

Assessment of candidates was also proving difficult. Because of tight staffing, internal assessors have little time to carry out the required observation and assessment of staff practice.

The Training Co-ordinator also feels that the monopoly of awarding bodies is a problem and the company has found some difficult to deal with: 'They're immensely bureaucratic and their cost structures difficult to justify'.

Finally, although the company finances the qualification, staff are not yet fully convinced of its value: 'Staff don't think it has increased loyalty to us or given us anything we didn't have already.' It is acknowledged, however, that the qualification is perhaps not sufficiently promoted within the company.

In spite of these reservations the company is convinced that NVQs are of value and will continue to offer them to all employees.

Case Study 8

Nestlé Rowntree Division, Nestlé UK Ltd, Norwich

Date of visit: 27 July 1993

Interview with: the Training Manager

Nestlé UK Ltd adopted its present form in 1992. It consists of four divisions: Nestlé Grocery, Nestlé Rowntree, Nestlé Food and Nestlé Food Services. There are 26 factories spread around the UK, employing about 20,000 people. In recent years the company has been restructuring and this, as in other firms, has involved a general 'flattening' of employment structures.

The Norwich factory, which is BS5750 accredited, employs about 1,200 staff, made up of the general manager, production managers, section managers, team leaders and shopfloor workers. About 100 employees are salaried. The rest are hourly-paid and include both seasonal and permanent employees working on three shifts: 8am to 5pm; 5pm to 9pm and 10.30pm to 7am.

The permanent workforce, as in other Nestlé UK factories, is generally static. Only about 20 employees leave each year which creates a 'zero recruitment situation'. Since people tend to stay in the job, employees belong largely to older age cohorts. There are roughly equal numbers of men and women, although women predominate among part-time staff, working mainly in production. The average working week is 20 hours. No distinctions are made between full- and part-time staff or between permanent and temporary workers. Temporary staff enjoy the same contractual terms as permanent staff, who are recruited exclusively from the former.

Seasonal staff are recruited on full- or part-time contracts between the summer months and February to prepare for the Christmas and Easter peak periods. Recruits include the unemployed, both highly qualified and unskilled individuals, and foreign people resident in the country for short periods. Very few have qualifications in relevant occupational areas such as food, hotels or catering. There is no need to advertise for staff as people constantly approach the factory for work and a local 'bush telegraph' comes into operation when seasonal workers are sought. People who worked at the factory in previous years are also approached if necessary.

Training

As Nestlé UK has brought together a number of established firms, there are inevitable differences in the way the 26 factories define and implement their training needs. Since Nestlé incorporated Rowntree in 1988, however, there has been an attempt to bring all factories up to a common standard. Team Leader training is one strategy that has been introduced to help towards this goal. Team leaders are front-line supervisors who set targets for their team relating to the targets they themselves have been set by their section managers. They also conduct appraisals of individual workers.

Work towards BS5750 has led to a more efficient organisation and greater team work. In spite of the considerable paperwork involved, it has streamlined procedures and led to more consistency in training. The same amount of training is provided irrespective of the hours or shifts people work. Shopfloor workers are trained by team leaders to do all the jobs needed. They receive individual training, whereas temporary staff receive training in small groups. New recruits are given induction training, including hygiene, health and safety at work, familiarisation with company procedures, regulations, local facilities and amenities. Induction also includes an introduction to supervisors and other team members, a conducted tour of their section and other relevant information. Subsequent training is provided as necessary and includes job-specific training, further hygiene and health and safety training, special skills (e.g. costing, computers, first aid), additional and enhanced skills (where applicable), aspects of effective team working and self-development.

Part-time team leaders and supervisors receive in-house management development training in groups as well as technical training on the job. Evening team leaders are recruited via internal advertisements from the shopfloor. They undertake a six-month training package. However, the amount of movement through job levels is small because the workforce is so static.

All employees have individual training records. Every six months they are appraised against set targets relating to production, hygiene, safety, awareness of BS5750 and job performance. It is the joint responsibility of managers, supervisors and individual workers to identify training needs. The factory is moving away from the 'Learning with Nellie' approach and is planning to provide a detailed in-house programme of refresher training for existing workers and a package for new workers, particularly on machinery: 'although the Rowntree site is not a very "high tech" organisation'.

Wherever possible, training is arranged in normal working hours, with employees' earnings protected. Reasonable expenses incurred during training are reimbursed. In-house training is sometimes delivered during shifts, even the night one (for example with the hygiene training programme). If employees on night shifts are asked to participate in day courses they are given a night off in lieu. Sometimes shift workers are asked to come in slightly earlier for training (with extra time paid for). This presents problems for women working on evening shifts who have to rearrange domestic arrangements if asked to come in for training sessions. This is one of the biggest problems encountered in Nestlé Rowntree training and trainers have to look for flexible ways around it.

There is some support for employees taking outside courses. For traditional reasons Nestlé Rowntree supports employees undertaking Open University courses, whether relevant to the job or not. Financial support for participation in education or training provided by other institutions or organisations, however, needs to be individually negotiated. The firm will also support employees wishing to undertake basic education courses but this is not widely publicised and it is claimed there is little demand: 'We looked into running basic education courses here but it would have been very expensive for the relatively small number of people who might need it. But we could facilitate sending people to outside schemes.' It is expected that any basic education problems will be picked up by team leaders. The problem may be bigger than admitted, however, since it was found at the end of the hygiene training programme that a lot of people were 'fazed' by a 30-question multiple test and it was subsequently made known that this could be administered orally. For people with hearing or language problems, signers and interpreters are brought in when necessary.

NVQs

Certain aspects of training are certificated (e.g. hygiene training, driving a forklift truck). Employees are encouraged to study for technical, scientific or commercial qualifications relevant to their employment and some have undertaken BTEC NVQ qualifications on a day-release basis.

Some pilot NVQ schemes have been set up in Nestlé UK factories in York and Leicester and Nestlé Rowntree Division is also considering offering food industry NVQs. Although there is recognition of the value of consistent training standards, there is nevertheless some scepticism within the company about the value of NVQs for older workers who are not likely to leave the company and go elsewhere: 'Ours is a fairly static workforce. People are not likely to want to start taking a qualification at

55'. There is also concern about the costs of NVQs unless, as in some areas, there is TEC money available to offset them, and some criticism of the bureaucracy involved in their implementation: 'At a recent trainers' meeting, we discussed NVQs. There was unanimous agreement that the process is excellent but less enthusiasm about the bureaucracy and paperwork involved.'

Similar concerns were expressed about IIP. Although the process is again considered excellent and valuable, the bureaucratic procedures involved in gaining the award are seen as an obstacle. Company restructuring has delayed progress on IIP although pilot work is going on in some factories. Where IIP and NVQs are concerned, Nestlé Rowntree is content to: 'watch rather than lead.'

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Case Study 9

Soho Pizzeria, London

Date of visit: 19 May 1993

Interviews with: Owner, General Manager and five other employees

This is a small firm employing approximately 24 staff and running one restaurant in Soho. It has links through its owners (who are senior staff) with the much larger firm of Pizza Express. Of the 24 staff, almost all are full-time and all work similar shifts (four or five days of seven hours a day), some days, some evenings. There are three types of job – waiting, chefs and kitchen porters – as well as duty managers and the general manager.

Staff are recruited on the basis of their experience in similar work. No qualifications are required. The firm does not need to advertise, since most staff came in to ask for jobs. There is no specific policy for recruitment, except that women do not generally work in the kitchens.

All staff joining the firm receive initial training. For waiting staff this involves one week, for chefs one month and for kitchen porters three weeks. Training is given on-the-job by their own staff, although chefs may be sent on specific courses as appropriate. Some training is from Pizza Express. Other training is ongoing as the need arises. Training is given in work time unless a person wishes to attend day-release at a local college.

All staff obtain Food Hygiene Certificates, but there is no work towards NVQs. The owner stressed that he would use NVQs if the process was simpler and if staff could be assessed during their normal working hours. For small firms who do not have their own assessors he considered the process too complicated and too expensive, even though staff can reach the standards without difficulty. If there was some kind of 'mobile assessment unit' that could come in without causing disruption, NVQ accreditation would be welcomed.

There are no recognised career paths in a small firm like this, although the two duty managers were promoted from within. The criteria for advancement are leadership, honesty and good customer service. Many staff are students or well-qualified people from overseas looking for

progression elsewhere. Most of the waiting staff are young (19–25 years), although the chefs tend to be older (25–35 years).

The major constraints on training are cost and time. Small firms cannot afford to pay overtime for training.

Interviews with Staff

A. is a part-time waitress aged 23 with a degree in social anthropology from Cambridge. Since leaving university she has travelled around and has worked for Soho Pizzeria for almost two years. Previous training includes a typing course (18 hours) and acupuncture (seven days). The week after the interview she was due to start a TEFL course for one month before going to Spain to teach in a language school.

B. is a chef from Guyana, aged 28. He came to Britain to study but ended up working in various restaurants, including Pizza Hut and Pizza Express. He has worked for this firm since 1989. B. has O- and A-Levels. In addition to training as a chef, he gained a Diploma in Sound Engineering, which he funded himself, from the School of Audio Engineering. Music is his hobby and he would take further training in it if there was an opportunity of a job.

C. is a kitchen porter who came from Mauritius in 1988 with a qualification in marine engineering. He has had various jobs in supermarkets, restaurants, shops and hospitals. He would like further training in marine engineering but cannot afford it and does not qualify for a grant.

D. is a waiter and duty manager. He also comes from Mauritius and is bi-lingual in English and French. He has worked as a chef, in hotel management and in a hospital. He has been with the firm for three years. He funded himself for a one-year full-time course in hotel management at a London college and is looking for a career in management. He would take other management courses if funding was available.

E. is a waiter who came from Morocco. He has A-level equivalent (Baccalaureate). Previously he was a chef and assistant manager at Pizza Express. He has worked for this firm for 18 months. He has received training as a photocopier technician and in glasshouse work in France. He wanted to do dentistry or travel agency work but was unable to obtain any. He is fluent in English, French and Arabic.

Case Study 10

Hands Cleaners, Leicester

Date of visit: 30 July 1993

Interview with: Training and Personnel Manager

Hands Cleaners Limited was formed in 1970 and is now the largest cleaning company in Leicestershire. It is part of a three-pronged concern. Hands Janitorial Limited was formed in 1980 to develop sales of cleaning equipment, materials, repairs and machine testing. This now includes a retail outlet in the city centre of Leicester. In addition to the general public, industry and commerce, there is a large customer-base of small and medium-sized cleaning contractors. Hands Industrial Limited was formed in 1988 to exploit the experience of the industrial cleaning division. In addition to the core business of window cleaning, considerable turnover is generated by factory cleaning to food processors such as Walkers Crisps, McVities, KP Foods and Dalgetty Spillers.

The corporate five-year plan is to expand into the West and South Midlands, probably opening sub-offices in Birmingham and Northampton.

The firm employs over 650 staff – managers, supervisors, industrial cleaners and cleaning operatives. Most of the supervisors and all the cleaning operatives are part-time. The industrial cleaners (i.e. cleaning outside windows of office blocks, etc.) are full-time and male. The details which follow apply to supervisors (about 30) and cleaning operatives (over 500), most of whom are female.

Hands carries a computerised list of people who approach them for a job. It rarely advertises unless it is in a particular area. Employees range from school-leavers who cannot get full-time work to those close to retirement age. The bulk of their operatives are women with domestic responsibilities. The minimum hours worked are 10 hours a week (i.e. two hours on five evenings). The most typical commitment is 15 hours a week. Some of the supervisors work longer hours (up to 28 hours a week).

For about 85 per cent of the workforce, this is their only job. For the others it is one of several part-time jobs or an addition to their normal day-job. Most of the part-time work involves early evening cleaning of industrial and business premises.

All employees, both full- and part-time, have compulsory training. Each person receives induction and core training. Other types of training occur as necessary. Areas of training include: induction; health and safety; security; quality – BS 5750; timesheets/wages; customer care; site inspections; round reports/location notes; equipment and materials; administration systems and workloading; recruitment/starter packs; equipment safety and maintenance; supervision; telephone techniques; office cleaning; toilet cleaning; floor maintenance – buffing; time skills; positive thinking; leadership; discipline; problem-solving; communication; delegation/motivation; meetings; job instruction training. All training is in-house and devised by the Training and Personnel Manager. Supervisors are trained by him and they, in turn, train their operatives, but occasionally the Training Manager goes out on-site to provide training himself. Sometimes clients provide rooms for this purpose. All staff are paid for the time they spend on training. Individual training records are kept on all employees.

All of the training is relevant to employees' current jobs or to progression. Suitable operatives are selected for supervisory posts as a lead person in a large team or as a supervisor. The majority (80 per cent) of the supervisors started as operatives. Three-fifths of the area managers came up through the company.

The firm has recently been working towards BS 5750 Quality Assurance recognition. It will be considering NVQs when these are available for their industry and is already making contact with the local accreditation centre.

Training needs are identified through area managers, and monitoring and follow-up of training is continuous.

The two main constraints on training are finance and the difficulty of getting part-time workers to attend beyond their normal hours. This is mainly because most of them have other commitments.

Case Study 11

South Nottinghamshire College

Date of visit: 4 June 1993

Interview with: an Assistant Principal (it was not possible to interview any other staff as it was half-term week)

(Details from the college document on staff training are also included.)

This was a traditional FE college in a suburb of a large city, controlled by a county LEA. With incorporation, it is expected to reorganise into a large city college with separate sites.

Staffing includes 180 full-time and part-time academic and 98 support staff. Part-time academic staff all work less than 12 hours a week. Part-time support staff work between 10 and 30 hours a week. Appointments are made according to equal opportunities criteria.

All staff are entitled to training and staff development. However, although part-time academic staff have access to all staff development events they are not paid for attending. Part-time support staff are trained according to individual need but may participate in other provision if they wish. The college also has a trainee category of graduate staff who are preparing for progression in administrative fields. Training held on college closure days is open to all staff.

A staff entitlement scheme allows academic staff to take modules of a diploma course at a local higher education institution and to gain accreditation as appropriate.

Academic staff are expected to obtain a Certificate of Education within three years of appointment if they do not have one; support staff in relevant positions are expected to attend a 'Meeting the public' training session.

Training within the college is in-house or bought in as appropriate. A Staff Development Committee made up of an officer and representatives from all areas oversee the staff development budget which is allocated to all sections. Section heads and staff development representatives of support staff determine its use. All staff have team-based appraisal and their action plans would include training needs.

Professional Development

Staff development is currently staffed by a cross-college co-ordinator (nine hours abatement) and a teacher training co-ordinator (five hours), responsible to the Assistant Principal. On incorporation this function and staff became part of personnel services, with administrative support.

Over the past four years the college has moved from a situation where staff development was seen as a 'perk' for chosen staff to study for a year, to one in which all members of staff participate in whole-day INSET events.

The following have been developed to support the professional development of all staff:

- a budget devolved to programme areas, with autonomy over allocation
- a training entitlement scheme that enables individuals to follow a modular programme leading to university accreditation if required
- an initial audit of staff skills
- a staff development committee with representation from all areas of the college
- a staff review system that will evolve into an appraisal, training and development scheme.

Further Planned Developments

Within one year:

- implementation of a staff development MIS system
- a coherent programme of available units/courses/events for all staff, including in-house teacher training programmes and whole-college INSET events (this to be open to 'outsiders' on a full-cost basis)
- training for all programme area managers in personnel, finance and curriculum
- implementation of a team-based appraisal system
- training programme for senior managers
- NVQ assessment (if available) for any support staff who want qualifications in their area of work.

Within two years:

- career development plans for any interested staff
- more advanced generic training for managers, to include industrial relations issues

- a post to support induction and support from part-time staff
- a fully developed programme of induction for all new staff
- assessor status for academic staff.

Within three years

Professional development programme that includes:

- regular updating of staff achievements
- a Record of Achievement (ROA) for staff
- a climate in which professional development is seen as central to college development
- an annual planned programme, based on college development plans and accurate information on staff skills.

Quality Issues and Staffing

The college is currently seeking IIP accreditation. Thus it is seeking to move towards a situation where all members of staff are qualified, competent and have access to appropriate development to support any changes required as a result of external factors such as technological innovation or curriculum innovation. In practice this means that:

- all lecturing staff will have a professional qualification in teaching within three years
- all support staff will be appropriately qualified, using NVQs if necessary, as they become available
- professional development will prioritise areas identified in the college development plan
- appraisal will focus on determination and implementation of staff development needs
- job descriptions will be reviewed every two years and changes agreed after consultation
- career development for academic and support staff will be related to skills needed within the institution.

Curriculum Issues and Staffing

As the curriculum in colleges changes in response to student needs and financial imperatives, there will be a discernible shift in the role of lecturers and a blurring of distinctions between academic and support staff. This will be managed so that there is a harmonisation of conditions of service.

The biggest barriers to effective training are not financial but attitudinal. Some staff are unaware of the benefits of training and view it as threatening rather than as a process of development and change.

The college is an accredited assessment centre for NVQs in Business Administration and Care but this is mainly for students. NVQs for staff are seen as costly and time-consuming. There is also a perception that NVQs are not developmental but reinforce the status quo and thus have a conservative function within an institution.

The major constraints the college is experiencing in relation to training and development are internal resistance to change, responses to changes of conditions of service and insufficient finance for development needs.

Case Study 12

The Rank Organisation

Date of visit: 8 June 1993

Interview with: the Personnel Controller

Rank, among the world's leading leisure and entertainment companies, is one of the largest companies in the UK. It currently employs 40,000 people in four operating divisions: film and television; holidays and hotels; recreation; and leisure.

Because of its size and diversity, Rank has no centralised training policy. The role of the corporate head office (staffed by 280) is primarily one of strategic development planning. The only clear training directive is on managerial training. Training is at the discretion of managers in the different areas, although Rank head office might advise on directions it feels should be taken. Thirteen Rank companies, including hotels, Butlin's and night-clubs, are now awarding NVQs and others are involved in piloting them or developing industry standards. In some hotels, NVQs are now offered to permanent full-time and part-time staff. In addition, one company has achieved the IIP award, six are undertaking it and another five planning to proceed. Three companies have achieved BS5750, one is committed and three are aiming to proceed.

Butlin's Southcoast World, Bognor Regis

Date of visit: 18 June 1993

Interviews with: the Personnel Executive, the Training Manager, the Retail Manager and five staff on seasonal contracts.

Southcoast World in Bognor Regis is one of Butlin's Holiday Worlds and part of the Rank Organisation. It employs 1,300 staff at the height of the holiday season and 800 during the low season. Most are full-time on fixed-term seasonal contracts. There are also a small number of part-time staff. A lot of those recruited to the centre are unqualified and unemployed.

The centre advertises in the National Job Centre network and in four local TEC areas – the Isle of Wight, Sussex, Hampshire and Surrey. For traditional reasons it also advertises in the Barnsley and Doncaster area, which is a good recruitment base. There are far more applications than jobs, so the company can afford to be selective.

NVQs were introduced in March 1992 and the centre has achieved the IIP award.

Interviews with Training and Retail Managers

Southcoast World has a policy of making NVQs available to all staff as this is now the standard required. NVQs are offered in all areas of work at the centre. Catering and Hospitality is accredited to Levels 1 and 2; Business Administration to Levels 1, 2 and 3; Retail and Cleaning to Levels 1 and 2; Customer Service to Level 3; Training and Development to Level 4; Security Guarding and Entertainment to Level 2.

All NVQ assessors are on-site. At the time of the visit there were 18 accredited assessors and about 40 designated assessors. The centre deals with eight NVQ awarding bodies.

The NVQ logo is now used in all advertising and when interviewed, job seekers are told they will be working towards an NVQ. Unemployed recruits on government training schemes are offered fixed-term contracts if they work towards NVQ Level 2. The possibility of gaining a qualification can act as a 'carrot' in recruitment although many applicants are not initially familiar with the qualification (e.g. the current Retail Manager who is becoming an NVQ assessor was not aware of NVQs before joining Southcoast World). At the time of the visit, there were 380 NVQ trainees, 49 of them in the retail section, and about 250 had achieved the desired level. There are possibilities for progression through the levels and most team leaders and managers had gone through Levels 1 and 2.

All employees receive 'Stars' induction training. This is a total customer service package which 'helps tremendously towards work standards'. It includes a one-day company induction, a one-day departmental induction and the Stars Recognition schemes (a job skills checklist up to NVQ Levels 1 and 2). On the second day of induction, every new recruit is put through an Assessment of Prior Learning interview with an adviser. The company also offers supervisory and management development programmes and ad hoc courses to suit individuals as identified in their regular eight-week appraisal by line managers: 'We encourage success planning'.

Training takes place both on- and off-the-job. In the retail area, for example, it is 60 per cent on- and 40 per cent off-the-job. Those undertaking Level 2 are allocated some free time for working towards the qualification and portfolio building. Each trainee has a National Record of Achievement.

According to managers, offering NVQs has led to significant improvements in standards of delivery, presentation and general awareness of required standards: 'the standard of staff here is very high; much higher than outside'. Introduction of NVQs has also resulted in increased staff morale and a reduction in staff turnover, which in the past tended to be high: 'NVQs stabilise our skills base and help with continuity of staff by providing an incentive to stay. Most people who achieve an NVQ are still with us six months later.'

Interview with Personnel Executive

(The Personnel Executive's comments have been reproduced verbatim as it is considered that they do not require commentary.)

In 1989 they (Butlin's) had spent millions of pounds on the infrastructure but not a penny on training staff. Since then there's been a huge qualitative change. We're working towards NVQs for every single occupation at the centre, up to Level 4. We're hoping that as NVQs are expanded at management level, we'll have some at Level 4 and get them APL'd (sic) towards a degree. We're currently discussing this with Brighton University.

We've produced our own NVQ leaflet and distributed it in Job Centres. We've also got a person permanently on the road recruiting in job centres and distributing information in the four TEC areas. We're also creating a post just to do developmental work on NVQs because so much is happening in NVQs. We could end up being an awarding body for Level 1 in Security. There was a Level 2 but no Level 1 so we've designed one ourselves.

Because of our links with the TEC, because we became a training centre, because we generated some income through TECs we were able to invest in training. Training became self-financing because of our links with TECs and that means that the training and personnel area is no longer a Cinderella support organisation. Our department has achieved respect and standing and we speak with a much stronger voice than before. We have now generated a demand for training among our managers because of pressure up from operatives.

We've ditched the idea of the 'Nellie trainer' and looked for qualified people delivering quality training. We have now become training self-sufficient, as we can offer training for trainers throughout the centre. We've taken occupationally qualified people and trained them to be trainers. We have 15 trained trainers on site. This gives us control over our own standards. The (training) department verifies assessment made by the trainers. Previously all (assessment) funding went to the Training and Development Unit at Brighton University but now we'll be an independent training centre alongside them. In the last 10 months we've created a network: an internal network with internal assessment and an external network with external assessment from Brighton University.

Southcoast World has been selected as one of 1,000 model NCVQ companies and is working towards becoming a Training and Development Centre which can assist other companies implement an NVQ policy themselves. If you commit yourself to the two initiatives – IIP and NVQ – then it's up to you to go out and sell them to others. We're taking the lead on NVQs locally. I've been singing the praises of NVQs for two years but only now are other managers and college principals beginning to think their organisation might take an interest. There's a definite shift to the positive now because I've been pushing it, but there was concern that I'd generate so much interest that supply couldn't meet demand. A qualification's value is what is perceived. I am concerned about the lack of effective publicity given to NVQs and initiatives such as IIP. TEED wasn't prepared to promote NVQs until they were up and running. They were relying on companies such as ours to network the value of NVQs based on our own positive experiences. There was no marketing budget for NCVQ. Marketing is being separately managed away from NCVQ and is more linked to NETTS than to NVQ.

Some of our trainees don't think it's a 'proper' training scheme because it's not in a college. I feel very strongly that the training given by an employer is more valuable than that given by a college. However, we are linking with a college and may do more interacting.

It's the progression factor which is the big motivator in NVQs. It's very important to people who failed at school. We took 30 NVQ achievers and their families to Doncaster and got a lot of local publicity. We wanted to show that it's equal to a college

qualification by making formal presentations of framed certificates. For many it's the first certificate they've ever received and the formal presentation was really something special. Recognition of achievement is very important. Our staff turnover has reduced by two-thirds in three years because people are being motivated to stay and complete a qualification. We get a better quality and more motivated applicant

We're contributing not just to our own success but the skill levels of the industry.

Interviews with Seasonal Staff

A., is aged about 20 and has a few GCSEs. He has worked at Southcoast World in the retail section for just over a year on rolling seasonal contracts and is currently working 39 hours a week. A. came to Southcoast World via a Job Centre. It was the first time he had heard of NVQs and this did not influence his decision to apply. He has since completed Level 1 and has found the training helpful. He thinks the qualification will help his job prospects and is very grateful that gaining Level 1 has helped move him to a position with a weekly wage.

B., an ex-lorry driver from Yorkshire aged 24, has been working as a security guard for 12 weeks. He has CSEs, a City and Guilds qualification in bricklaying and other assorted qualifications. B. started but did not complete an NVQ in bar management before coming to Butlin's. He found out about Southcoast World in the Barnsley and Doncaster Job Centre and was attracted by the idea of an NVQ in Security, which he believed would be useful. He is now on a seasonal contract and working towards NVQ Level 2. This involves assessment in areas such as radio, patrolling, body and vehicle search, access control, health and safety, fire alarm duty, customer care. Most of his work is conducted on night shifts, so he finds it can be tiring to keep up with the qualification. However, the training staff are extremely accessible, helpful and supportive. B. had recently been nominated Security Officer of the Month, which carried a small financial award. This has made him feel appreciated.

C., aged 30, left school at 16 with three O-Levels and is now working in Southcoast World shops. Before Butlin's he had undertaken a 10-week computer training course as part of Employment Training and had started working towards an NVQ. He had also taken a BTEC National Certificate in computing in his own time and at his own expense. C. is desperate to 'catch up' and acquire qualifications to better his job prospects. At Southcoast World, he has completed Retail Level 2 in about four-and-a-

half months and is now on a seasonal six-month contract. C. is worried about his future prospects and not yet convinced that NVQ will help him find a permanent job, as his experience is that a number of retailers have not heard of the qualification: 'I was told it would make a lot of difference but it hasn't yet. Shops haven't heard of it so it hasn't helped me yet. The man in Littlewoods said "what's that then?" '

D., a man in his 20s, has been working at Butlin's since August 1992 as a security guard. He used to be a laundry supervisor but was made redundant. He had since undertaken a hotel management course and gained a City and Guilds certificate in alcoholic beverages. He saw the Southcoast World advertisement at a Job Centre and was interested in the job, with the qualification a secondary attraction. D. is currently working towards Level 2 and enjoying the process so much he would like to work towards Level 3. Unlike C., he thinks the NVQ will help him to obtain other jobs.

E. is in his 20s and has eight CSEs and two GCSEs. He used to be a fitter in the army and is now working in one of the Southcoast World bars, where he is on a seasonal contract until the end of the summer. E. found out about the job at the Isle of Wight Job Centre. At the time he did not know much about NVQs and was not very interested in them. Now that he has taken NVQ Level 2 in Catering and Bar Hospitality, he is very enthusiastic about the qualification. Like B., he considers the training system at Southcoast World to be extremely good, with 'loads of back-up and encouragement' from training staff. E. would like to enter pub management, but like C. has found a general lack of awareness of NVQs outside Butlin's. He felt that NVQs should be promoted more widely among employers by policy-makers and Employment Services.

Summary and Conclusions

The Experience and Views of Employers

Most of the organisations visited in the course of the research reported here were gradually reducing the number of full-time posts and replacing them with part-time ones.

Attitudes to flexible workers

According to training or personnel managers in companies with large numbers of part-time or seasonal employees, the differentials between full- and part-time staff had been virtually eliminated and there was greater recognition of workers' wider family responsibilities and the need to integrate business needs with those of individuals. Only one training manager (in a firm that was visited but not used for a case study) expressed a dismissive attitude towards part-time workers as 'people just looking for pin money and a way of getting away from their families.'

Interviewees, especially in the retail sector, frequently referred to the stability of a largely female, part-time workforce. However, although there was some recognition that women workers face more barriers to training and career progression than do men, there was a general reluctance to offer staff anything which appeared to advantage women more than men:

> *We've shied away from women-only (training) programmes when there wasn't a basis of something available for everybody.*
>
> *You've got to ensure that anything provided is for men as well as women.*

Policies on training

In contrast to some of the findings of the literature search, all the employers visited had a strong interest in providing high quality training for all members of the workforce: 'We've invested a hell of a lot of money in the building. It would be a waste of money if we didn't also invest in the staff of the building.' Most of the companies had taken steps to extend or improve training for part-time and temporary workers and the majority had developed sophisticated and comprehensive in-house training programmes. Much of the training provided, however, was not accredited towards a nationally recognised qualification. There were nevertheless signs of a shift towards accreditation. Southcoast World has made NVQs

the basis of their in-house training: W.H. Smith and Sheffield Family and Community Services are introducing them as an integral part of training and several other organisations have introduced them, albeit somewhat uneasily, on a pilot basis in some branches or factories. Several companies were seeking accreditation for their in-house training programmes and some had adapted their training along the lines of NVQs.

Most managers claimed that continuing training opportunities are available to all employees and that staff appraisals offer an opportunity for all staff to express their training needs.

Some knew little about the National Training and Education Targets and several were sceptical about their achievability.

Obstacles to provision of training

The most frequently mentioned constraints on the amount of training provided were the costs involved, inadequate budgets, production pressures, lack of time within work schedules and lack of cover for part-time workers. A number of managers also mentioned the difficulties they had experienced in providing training for women working particular shifts whose time was constrained by domestic commitments.

In some organisations with a strong policy on training for all employees, there was a tension between work pressures and training which resulted in part-time workers not being released for any training that was not considered absolutely essential for the job. In some there was also a tension between flexible working and training. At Oxfordshire County Council, for example, there was an admitted mismatch between the full-time hours of conventional training and flexi-time working: 'Timing is a major constraint. We have so many part-time workers, why are we still using these conventions?' Other organisations were dealing with this by moving away from reliance on courses, towards increased use of distance and independent learning.

Incentives to extend or improve training

Work towards kitemark standards such as BS5750 or the IIP award and introduction of NVQs had increased commitment to training and the quality of training in several organisations.

Customer requirements had also been a strong incentive to provide good quality training:

We have never been tempted to compromise quality service for rapidly increased turnover. The premier standards demanded by our clients of 19 years have been consistently achieved. (Hands)

We can't afford to get anything wrong. Everybody knows us and it's a very competitive field so we have to keep ahead. (ASDA)

Attitudes to National Vocational Qualifications

A number of the managers interviewed were not totally convinced of the need for qualifications, claiming that they looked for other qualities in employees: 'We look for some experience with the public, not qualifications. We expect a basic education, and look at their interests and the jobs they've had. Communication skills are very important.'

Attitudes to NVQs among managers varied between enthusiasm, resignation – 'that's the way the world's going' – and total scepticism. The majority of interviewees had reservations about the expense and bureaucracy involved in implementing NVQs. There were also complaints about the complexity of procedures, the number of forms to complete, the number and monopoly of awarding bodies, their lack of attention to feedback and the perceived irrelevance of some competences.

A number of organisations where staff had been trained as assessors also mentioned the difficulty of finding the time, amid working pressures, for observing and assessing staff performance.

The costs of NVQs were referred to by virtually all the managers interviewed and there was an awareness that this was a particular deterrent to smaller companies. Some training and personnel managers were of the opinion that there had been inadequate national investment in NVQs and that publicity and marketing had been poor: 'NCVQ have a real marketing problem'; 'It's been a disaster'; 'They've failed to generate enthusiasm in the media'. Some managers also expressed reservations about the current higher level of promotional activities, describing them as too little, too late.

NVQs had been very effectively introduced in one organisation (South-coast World). Here the keys to successful implementation were: total commitment from managers; use of NVQs as the framework for all company training rather than as an optional 'add-on'; continuous promotion of NVQs in recruitment and communications with workers. South-coast World was dealing with eight awarding bodies, 'using the same basic system without problem', and managers were enthusiastic about the benefits of introducing the qualification, listing these as: higher quality recruitment, provision of opportunities for people who had failed

to achieve school qualifications, improved work standards and performance, raised staff morale and lower staff turnover. They claimed that the introduction of NVQs had created a strong training culture within the organisation: 'We have now generated a demand for training among our managers because of pressure up from operatives.' In this organisation the offer of an NVQ, tied to employment contracts, was an important ingredient in attracting and retaining high calibre staff.

In organisations where NVQs had been introduced only half-heartedly, with little promotional activity and no support for candidates, take-up was, not surprisingly, low. Several training officers in retail stores said that the qualification was available but no one was taking one at the moment. In one case (Safeway) this was because there had been no 'push' from managers, who were reluctant to highlight the possibility because of lack of progression opportunities. In other cases (ASDA, W.H. Smith) assessors (both internal and external) did not have time to follow up progress.

The Experience and Views of Part-time and Temporary Workers

Many interviewees were women with families, with some school qualifications but little or no post-school education or training. For them the job was a question of economic necessity, to be fitted around their family responsibilities. Some had vocational qualifications unrelated to their current job. In one organisation (Oxfordshire County Council) interviewees were mainly highly qualified women in managerial positions with a strong interest in training.

Many of the male employees interviewed were fixed contract or seasonal workers. These were mainly students or previously unemployed individuals seeking training and qualifications as a means to a permanent job. In one case, e.g. Soho Pizzeria, staff were highly qualified individuals, some from overseas, for whom the job was merely a stop-gap measure.

Attitudes to flexible working

Most part-time interviewees expressed satisfaction with their working hours and the possibility they offer to combine domestic life and paid work. However, many believed that they had less status and prospects than full-time workers and were perceived as 'second class' employees without ambitions or special skills. A significant number associated working part-time with diminished career opportunities. While most

wished to continue working part-time at least while their children were young, many were also aware of the extent to which this limited or damaged their progression prospects. This was particularly the case at Midland, where a number of interviewees felt that as keytimers they had limited job and progression opportunities and that women with children were not 'pushed' or encouraged to progress. Encoders, particularly, felt that a sharp distinction was made between full-timers and keytimers, with the former offered more varied jobs, more responsibility and greater progression opportunities. Higher graded staff were less likely to have these views, claiming that progression was a question of 'pushing' oneself.

Experience of training

Interviewees as a whole appeared satisfied with the amount of training they had received and a number commented that the training offered by employers is of much higher quality than in the past. Most felt that they were adequately trained for the job which they were doing, although there were some exceptions where because of pressures of work, no one had time to demonstrate new operations and processes.

Interviewees had received mainly induction and on-the-job training at the workplace. Only higher graded employees (such as interviewees at Oxfordshire County Council) had received employer-supported external training. In some cases, development programmes were available for lower grade and part-time staff (e.g. ASDA, Midland, Oxfordshire County Council). However, only the ASDA programme is linked to career progression within the organisation, provided workers increase their hours.

Although some of the in-house training received by interviewees had been in the form of courses and group sessions, in many cases independent learning had been encouraged through workbooks that employees completed at their own pace. There was also considerable use of videos and distance learning packages. In one case (W.H Smith), successful completion of learning packages was tied in with pay structures.

Attitudes to training

Attitudes to training differed considerably between different groups of part-time and temporary workers. As other research has found, interest in training and job progression was highest among qualified workers in higher grade jobs, who had already received considerable training.

Interest in training was strongly influenced by the possibilities it offered for job progression. Staff seeking progression were most likely to be employees in higher grade positions, younger employees who had not

done well at school and wanted to take advantage of employer-provided training, older women whose children were not so dependent, and employees who had previously been unemployed. Some interviewees were frustrated at the lack of further training opportunities and job prospects and a significant number were undertaking vocational courses in their own time and at their own expense to increase and broaden their skill levels.

Students, women with young families or people with another job were less interested in taking more training and jobs with more responsibility. Interviews in a number of organisations confirmed a common finding that many mothers put their ambitions 'on hold' during the family formation period. Little interest in more training or qualifications was expressed by interviewees who had recently returned from career breaks or whose children were still very young. Some appeared surprised to be asked about training, as it did not figure highly on their current list of priorities. Many in this group were content with their current level of responsibility, fearing that more might upset the balance between home and work. As one put it: 'You've got enough pressures if you've got kids: you don't need pressures at work as well'. Some, however, thought they might seek full-time hours and job progression in the future.

The case studies suggest that interest in training among groups who had previously been offered little or none was significantly increased when opportunities were presented to them. For example, home care workers in Sheffield who had not received training in the past appreciated the opportunity it offered to increase recognition of their skills and achieve higher status for the job.

Attitudes to qualifications

Many interviewees had no accreditation for their (often considerable) work experience and skills. This was a cause of regret to some interviewees, especially those at the bank, who felt they had little to show for their training, skills and years of experience. A large number wished they had qualifications but claimed that they had not been eligible for day release and that to gain them now they would have to take courses in their own time and at their own expense.

Some interviewees had experienced a male-female workforce divide in relation to qualifications: young men with college qualifications but no work experience had entered retail organisations as managers with well-defined career routes, while women with well-developed skills and experience on the job but no 'pieces of paper' hit the promotion barrier. One woman claimed this situation created a negative training culture

among part-time employees, with those seeking training considered to be 'getting above themselves'. The training officer of one large organisation admitted that seeking qualifications can sometimes be divisive.

There was little awareness of NVQs among interviewees below manager level, except in the organisations where the qualification had been successfully introduced.

Interviewees in an organisation where NVQs had become integral to company training (Southcoast World) were generally enthusiastic about the training and saw the qualification as a means to a better job. However, some who had completed Levels 1 or 2 had discovered that other employers were generally unaware of the qualification.

Interviewees in organisations where NVQs were optional and not well-promoted were less enthusiastic. An ASDA employee was trying to take the qualification but was feeling isolated and discouraged through lack of support. She felt that there was little incentive to undertake NVQs in the store and that participation would only increase when workers could see other colleagues successfully involved.

Barriers to participation in training

The main deterrents to undertaking training mentioned by interviewees were:

- little training available other than for the immediate job
- no progression prospects attached to training
- lack of time outside working hours to undertake training
- the expectation of being refused time off for training
- having to pay for one's own training and qualifications when not undertaken in working time
- the problem of finding and paying for alternative care for children if training undertaken in own time (many interviewees had very tight arrangements, usually involving relatives, childminders and, in a few cases, company-subsidised nurseries)
- lack of interest in more training.

Women part-time employees tended to blame themselves and their circumstances rather than their employer for any dearth of training opportunity.

Lack of time for training outside working hours was the major barrier to participation for part-time employees with a typical domestic load: children to pick up from school, meals to get, shopping to do, etc. Hands

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Cleaners particularly mentioned the difficulty experienced in getting part-time workers to attend training because of their other commitments.

The next most frequently mentioned obstacle to participation in training was lack of jobs and promotion opportunities. While some of the larger organisations visited offer limited progression opportunities to part-time workers (e.g. at ASDA, workers with potential can be encouraged to take higher graded posts with more responsibility), in a number of the others, career progression was linked with working full-time and geographical mobility – both of which are difficult for many women with young families. In some of the organisations visited there were no clear career paths and no possibilities of moving upwards unless, as at ASDA, staff were prepared to increase their hours. In most cases part-time staff had no way of putting themselves forward or being promoted unless nominated by managers. Some interviewees expressed the view that since additional training would not assist their career progression, there was no point in seeking any. Encoders at Midland, for example, were frustrated at working below their skill levels and capabilities and felt that as there were no higher graded jobs to move to, more training would be irrelevant.

In some cases, employees' experience and perceptions were at variance with the intent of central policy. For example, at Midland, which has a good record on training and equal opportunities, interviewees had little knowledge of training possibilities other than those required for their current (or previous) jobs and many were unaware of measures such as career break schemes for employees below manager level. In a number of organisations, the message given by central offices that training and progression opportunities were open to all workers conflicted with the experience of some part-time employees who had found they had fewer opportunities than full-time workers or employees at higher grades. In one case where women part-time managers had been able to identify and rectify their training gaps, some admitted that access to training was not so easy for part-time workers in lower grade jobs.

There appeared to be several reasons for contradictions between policy and practice: tight staffing and pressures of work; the reluctance of branch or line managers to release workers for training; the undermining of central policies on training and development by other factors such as financial pressures, redundancies, organisational restructuring and legislative changes; insufficient dissemination of information about training possibilities and equal opportunities measures. It may also be the case that information is available but that employees working tight shifts may not have time to look at noticeboards or visit training rooms within their working hours.

Conclusions

The case studies lead to the following conclusions.

The shift from full-time towards part-time jobs is still accelerating in the service sector. However, the general impression gained in researching the case studies was that flexible working hours benefit the employer more than the employee. Some training officers and part-time employees confided during interviews that employment practices such as moves towards part-time work, home working, contracting out, retiring full-time workers and bringing them back as consultants, were having a negative impact on worker morale and aspirations. According to an interviewee in local government: 'people are cobbling odd bits of work together, none of which amounts to proper employment. Some part-time workers are putting in full-time hours, which amounts to considerable value for employers.'

A recurrent theme in interviews was the limited career prospects of part-time workers and the generally diminishing potential for upward progression within firms: 'total vertical progression is not realistic these days' (Oxfordshire County Council). A large number of interviewees wished to remain working part-time for domestic reasons but most progression possibilities were linked to full-time posts and, in some cases, willingness to relocate. Training and development programmes which are not linked to progression opportunities therefore risk raising expectations that cannot be realised. For this reason, the training officer of a large retail organisation expressed scepticism about the possibility of achieving the National Training and Education Targets: 'The basic flaw is how can you get workers to Level 3 if they're not in supervisory jobs? The targets are unrealistic and damaging because the process is devalued by unachievability.'

Any problems in meeting the National Targets may not, however, be due to lack of interest in training. The case studies indicate clearly that workers who previously received little opportunity to train will react very positively when accessible opportunities are offered to them; that many are anxious to improve their skill levels and that many will, when practically and materially possible, undertake vocational programmes at their own expense. However, many part-time workers are deterred from participating in training outside working hours because of lack of time, money and affordable childcare.

For many part-time workers, therefore, there may be little incentive to undertake training that is not compulsory and offered within working hours unless:

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- there is financial support for training
- there is childcare support or financial assistance towards childcare
- training is firmly linked to pay or promotion opportunities.

The case studies suggest particularly that, in provision of training, greater attention needs to be paid to the circumstances and needs of women employees. The interviews highlighted three problems in particular:

- the lack of information and support for labour market returners making the transition back to paid work
- the difficulties women experience in attending training outside working hours
- the contradiction between having a flexible (part-time) workforce and an inflexible (full-time) training policy. If the Lifetime Targets are to be met, employers and training providers need to ensure that the timing and delivery of training is tailored more to the needs of part-time employees.

If part-time workers' existing experience and training, which are often substantial, were accredited towards NVQs there would be a great leap forward towards the achievement of the National Targets. However, since relatively few employers accredit experience and skills developed in the workplace towards a qualification, and so many have strong reservations about NVQs, it is hard to see how exhortation alone will bring about this situation.

Since the National Targets are tied so closely to NVQs, it seems unlikely that they can be achieved unless:

- companies are offered help and incentives to introduce NVQs
- measures are taken to solve the problems encountered with the implementation of NVQs
- there is a national strategy to combat the widespread ignorance about NVQs which, as one manager discovered, extends even to Employment Services: 'People working at Job Centres often don't know anything about NVQs. We have to explain it to them. We often have to tell Unemployment Benefit offices what forms, etc. are needed.'

Suggestions from managers on ways of extending use of NVQs included:

- more effective national promotional activities
- reductions in the costs of registration and assessment
- money or tax incentives to employers to offset the costs
- changes in the way awarding bodies are administered
- assessment that is totally workplace-based

- a mobile assessment unit for smaller firms
- use of TEC events to disseminate information and insights from firms that have successfully introduced NVQs.

Peer pressure may also increase introduction of NVQs. The personnel executive at Southcoast World had found that using TEC meetings on a 'buddy' system to talk about successful implementation of NVQs was resulting in greater interest among other employers: 'If you commit yourself to the two initiatives – IIP and NVQ – it's up to you to go out and sell them to others.'

NVQs have been most successfully implemented in companies where:

- there is full commitment to them from managers
- they have been gradually introduced following full consultation with workers and their representatives
- they have been continuously promoted
- they are used as the framework for all company training.

Take-up of NVQs is inevitably low in companies where they have not been made integral to company training, where they have not been well promoted, and where there is inadequate support and assessment available. In such cases, undertaking NVQs requires considerable motivation and drive on the part of individuals, many of whom will be working towards them on their own, often in their own time, which can be an isolating and discouraging experience.

Contradictions between central training policy and actual practice might be solved by improved communication channels, target-setting, monitoring and report-back and more widespread dissemination of information about company policies and training opportunities at branch level. Central training policies appear to work best in those organisations where training staff is an important element of line managers' job descriptions and where they are appraised on their record for training and developing staff.

Many of the organisations used in this study were large ones with advanced training policies. Nevertheless, a very large proportion of part-time workers work in small firms with under 25 employees. Smaller firms with fewer resources may need assistance from government or TECs before they can follow the example of larger, leading-edge companies by extending training to all employees and introducing NVQs. Such assistance might include tax incentives, greater discretion for TECs to use budgets to support initiatives in small businesses and collaborative training initiatives.

These points, which confirm many of the findings of the literature search (Part One), suggest that there will need to be a number of policy and practical shifts among employers and policy-makers before the Lifetime Targets can be achieved.

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APPENDIX

Question Schedule for Training or Personnel Officers

The questions were designed to elicit information on the size of firm, employee profile, numbers of part-time and full-time employees, and to identify: the nature and extent of training offered to the target employee groups and the constraints operating on employers and training strategies that illustrate good practice.

- What kinds of jobs are held by part-time/temporary staff? What hours are worked?
- What are the company's recruitment policies? (e.g. target groups; what qualifications are needed?)
- Is there any policy to recruit women labour market 'returners'?
- Which employees are offered training: all or some?
- What is the nature of training offered to part-time and temporary workers?
- Is there any accreditation attached to training (e.g. NVQ) for these groups of workers?
- At what stage is training offered (at take-up of post; regular intervals, etc.)?
- Is training optional or compulsory?
- Is training:
  - in-house?
  - bought in?
  - off-site?
  - in own time or work time?
  - if in own time, is employee's time paid for?
- Is the purpose of training mainly to help with current job, to update, or to assist progression?
- Do part-time workers have access to career paths? Can those with potential and ambition progress?

- Is there a training follow-up monitoring process? Is there anyone with whom employees can discuss their experience of training and training needs?
- What constraints is the firm operating under in relation to training? What, if resources allowed, would it like to offer?

Question Schedule for Employees

The questions were designed to elicit the target groups' experience of, and attitudes to, training. Responses were confidential and no names were required. Interviewees were asked:

- Brief personal details – age, previous educational background, qualifications, current post, career history before current job, family situation.
- How long they have been in their current post.
- (For returners) How long was the career break? Did they work for the same firm before the break?
- What training have they received for their current job (e.g. nature of training, how long, where received, when received, whether this was in or outside working hours, who funded it)?
- Has their training been accredited towards a nationally recognised qualification?
- How aware are they of National Vocational Qualifications?
- Are they aware of any training or development opportunities that will help them progress beyond their current level of responsibility?
- Have they participated in training provided by agencies, other than their current employer? If so, what is the nature of training, how long, where received, when received (in or outside working hours), who funded it?
- Would they like more training if it were available?
- What kind of training would they like if it were available?
- What factors would motivate them to undertake training?
- What factors have prevented them from undertaking training?

Wasted Potential

Training and Career Progression for Part-Time and Temporary Workers

Veronica McGivney

Atypical workers, whether part timers, those on temporary contracts or people working in a variety of flexible options, now account for nearly one in five of the population – more than in any other EC state. *Wasted Potential* is the report of a research project undertaken by NIACE, with funding from the Employment Department, to investigate training provision for this group. The findings uncover a worrying contradiction between the stated objectives of government and industry in developing a flexible workforce, while at the same time providing only an inflexible approach to training based on a "full time norm".

Wasted Potential looks at how employers are meeting the challenge of training and career progression for atypical workers in a series of case studies which reveal a variety of good practice and a range of solid achievements.

Readership: *Wasted Potential* will be of immediate practical interest to all involved in human resource management and to those involved in developing training policy in the public and private sectors.

Veronica McGivney is Research and Development Officer of NIACE – the National Organisation for Adult Learning. Among her other publications are *Motivating Unemployed Adults to Undertake Education and Training*, *Tracking Adult Learning Routes*, *Education's for Other People* and *Women, Education and Training*.

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